A

VIEW,

&c.

BY THE HONOURABLE THOMAS ERSKINE.

A

VIEW

OF THE

STATE OF THE NATION,

AND OF THE

MEASURES OF THE LAST FIVE YEARS;

SUGGESTED BY

EARL GREY'S SPEECH

IN THE

HOUSE OF LORDS,

13TH JUNE, 1810.

BY

THOMAS PEREGRINE COURTENAY, Esq.

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1810.

In presuming to comment upon the Speech of a Lord of Parliament, I am to premise that the Publisher of the Speech has declared that the publication was without the knowledge of the Noble Lord himself.

But I trust that an usage, now of considerable antiquity, will permit me to consider the publication as the genuine declaration of his Lordship's sentiments.

The same explanation applies to the Speeches of other Members of Parliament, which I have freely cited from the Collections of Debates. I have referred, however, to no passage, which bore any appearance of inaccuracy.

It is hoped that the length of time which has elapsed, since the delivery of Lord GREY's Speech, has not diminished the interest which it excited at the moment.

Many of its topics, indeed, derive a new importance, from the expectation of his Lordship's return to Power.—From the objections which he has made to the late conduct of affairs, the Public may be instructed in the methods by which he proposes to ameliorate the State of the Nation.

The great length, into which I have been led by an anxiety to afford the materials for appreciating correctly the Proceedings of the British Government, with regard, especially, to *Spain* and *Portugal*, has induced me to postpone the Consideration of some of the most important topics of the Speech;—particularly the *Orders* in *Council*, and our relations with AMERICA;—*Constitutional Reforms*;—and the System of *rewarding and encouraging Public Services*.

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The topics, of which I have completed the Discussion, I have endeavoured so fully to illustrate, that, if I should fail in impressing upon my Readers the opinions which I entertain, I may assist them in forming a more accurate judgment ;—it will not be more sincere.

Lincoln's Inn Fields,
2d February, 1811.

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Ankyzin Angak. 1849

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A

VIEW

OF THE

STATE OF THE NATION,

&c. &c. &c.

1432

VARIOUS considerations give importance to Lord Grey's Speech. His history has been connected with that of the Country for more than twenty years. As a nobleman of high character, who has been a minister, and who expects to be a minister again; as the surviving leader of a party once led by Mr. Fox; as the chosen ally of Lord GRENVILLE; as the former champion of the Reformers, and the present object of their hate; or as the least democratical of the Whigs: Earl Grey has a peculiar right to be heard. "The State of the Nation" is a topic worthy of the speaker; nothing can be more desireable than a correct representation of "the difficulties with which "the country is surrounded;" and a dispassionate investigation of the causes which have led to them, and the means by which they may be alleviated or removed. To an enquiry into our situation, thus general and comprehensive, Lord Grey has laudably

directed the powers of his mind, his experience, and his eloquence. We have every reason to be satisfied that the speech now before us contains a summary of his opinions upon all the interesting topics of public controversy; and not of his opinions alone, but of those of the powerful party with which he is connected.

The merits of His Majesty's present ministers are by Lord Grey connected with every part of his subject. His speech, in fact, may fairly be considered, not only as faithfully representing the view taken by Lord GREY of the national dangers, but as embodying into one grand attack all the various charges preferred by his lordship and his friends, during four sessions of parliament, against those who have administered the Government since he lost his own power. We may be satisfied, that no point of importance, upon which Lord GREY's avowed opposition is founded, has been omitted in the general recapitulation, which, after solemn preparation, and with the exertion of all his powers, he has delivered in parliament.

In examining therefore this "celebrated speech *," I am investigating, in the mode most likely to produce full and free discussion, the nature and causes of our alledged danger, and the claims of the ministers to public confidence and support. I am taking the most correct view of the state of the nation, and retracing most usefully the events which have produced it.

The following outline of the speech will introduce us most fairly to the several details.

I. The speaker first assumes the fact, that the

* Publisher's preface.

country is surrounded by "great and increasing dif- "ficulties *;" he states his opinion that the measures of the administration have tended to aggravate our danger. He attributes the support which, notwithtanding the supposed general opinion of its incompetency, the measures of that administration have received, to "the apprehension that a recorded dis- "approbation of the measures of Government might "multiply and aggravate the distresses of the em- "pire †."

II. He states his motion to have received the approbation of Lord Grenville.

III. Lord Grey then mentions the great encrease of our expenditure since the commencement of the last war;—the severity of our taxation;—and the statement made by certain individuals, that "*taxation* "*has nearly attained its utmost limits* ‡." He charges the ministers with having much exceeded the scale of expenditure of the administration of 1806, and of having met that encreased expence with insufficient provision §.

IV. "What the country stands" consequently "the most in need of" he states to be "*repose*;" but he avows his conviction, that "the system of our "policy ||" has rendered peace unattainable; and he admits that he has no reason to suspect ministers of an indisposition to peace ¶; "although he most "strongly feels that their conduct has been such as "almost to remove every hope of that kind."

V. After some general expressions of abhorrence of

* Speech, P. 1. † P. 3. ‡ P. 7. § P. 31-7.
|| P. 8. ¶ P. 9.

the character of Bonaparte, Lord Grey sets forth the great extent of his power, and assumes the probability of his directing his whole force to "the "destruction of this country, the sole aim of his "policy *,"—receiving a great accession of power by "the subjugation of the Peninsula of Spain †." In this situation he recommends "the provident system "of husbanding our resources ‡;" which he considers as having been the policy of his own administration of 1806. After its dissolution, he says, an opposite policy was pursued; "the merits of "which are to be traced in those fatal expeditions," which (as Lord Grey conceives) "have exhausted "the resources of the country, and covered our "national character with disgrace §."

Proceeding more particularly on this subject, he adverts to "the folly and the ruin of embarking in "military operations against France, at a time when "there was no power in existence to give us an "effectual co-operation ||." In relation to *Spain*, particularly, he charges ministers with improvidence, especially in having embarked in the war "without "ascertaining whether there was a government in "that country capable of affording such an efficient support to the dispositions of the people, and to "our efforts for their assistance, as was likely to "bring the contest to a successful termination ¶;" and "without enquiring whether there existed re-"sources sufficient to supply a British army with the "necessary provisions **;" and he states, "that after "the experience of one unfortunate campaign, mi-"nisters risqued another army in Spain, only to pur-"chase misfortune, calamity and disgrace ††."

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* Speech, P. 11. † P. 13. ‡ P. 14. § P. 15.
|| P. 17. ¶ P. 20. ** Ib. †† P. 21.

In the result, according to Lord Grey "the power "of the enemy, and the dangers which we dreaded, "have materially encreased since our exertions be- "gan, while we have to meet them with diminished "strength *."

VI. Adverting then to the lesser Powers, Lord Grey strongly censures the attack upon Denmark in 1807, which power he states to have been thereby rendered "an enemy much more formidable than it "ever could have become by its unwilling acquies- "cence in the dictation of France †."

VII. He suspects that our policy towards Sicily has been unwise, and hints that "we may with a "lamentable certainty portend its fall under the "dominion of France ‡."

VIII. In regard to America he represents that, by our "Orders in Council," we have destroyed the only Neutral not under the dominion of France, and have thereby transferred the American trade to foreign European flags, so as to establish a nursery of seamen for Bonaparte; and, that it has only been owing to the departure of the ministers from their own policy, (under the system of *licences*, which he strongly reprobates,) that our trade has not been ruined in the proportion formerly predicted by the opponents of Government §."

IX. Lord Grey then censures the "short sighted "policy" which dictated the restriction upon the Bank in 1797, blames the Government for taking no step in consequence of the state of the circulation, and hopes that the payment in specie may within a short time be resumed ||.

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* Speech, P. 22. † P. 23. ‡ P. 24. § P. 25.

|| P. 40.

X. Then adverting to the state of Ireland, Lord Grey gives his opinion, generally, in favor of uniting all classes of people in the defence of their common country *.

XI. He proceeds to charge His Majesty's ministers with "marked inattention to the just solicitude of "the people for a timely and salutary reform of "abuses, financial and political †." He states that the influence of the Crown has enormously encreased and ought to be diminished ‡; he approves of the existence of a fund at the Crown's disposal for rewarding public services, but reprehends the late disposal of a particular sinecure office §.

XII. On the subject of parliamentary reform, Lord Grey states his opinions to have undergone some change ||, though he is still the advocate of a temperate and practical correction of abuses in the constitution of the House of Commons. He refers to his conduct in 1792 ¶, in testimony of his uniform rejection of theoretical speculations; and he reprobates the conduct of the modern reformers.

XIII. He gives his opinion in favour of the privileges of parliament lately questioned, insinuating nevertheless that he objects in some degree to their assertion in a recent instance **.

XIV. He complains of the basest misrepresentations of his own conduct, by which he has been robbed of his popularity ††.

The noble Lord concludes with a motion for an

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* Speech, p. 40. † P. 43. ‡ P. 49. § P. 51.
|| P. 53. ¶ P. 59. ** P. 65. †† P. 79.

address to the Throne, expressing in parliamentary language the sentiments of his speech.

Although in this address Lord Grey does not specifically represent the necessity of a change of ministry, that result is distinctly to be inferred; and his frequent reference to the administration of 1806, sufficiently explains his Lordship's opinion of the expediency of recalling to power the persons who composed that administration, as the surest mode of relieving the country from the difficulties under which it is supposed to labour.

Although therefore it may be fairly conceded, that if the charges preferred against His Majesty's ministers were substantiated, the people might justly call for their immediate removal, in the confidence that their successors could not be *less* capable of administering the Government, yet the very nature of some of Lord Grey's charges, and the object of his exertions, avowed with sufficient explicitness, renders it unfair, indeed almost impossible, to separate, in our consideration, the merits of the present ministers, from those of their predecessors, and of the individuals by whom, in case of their removal, they would in human probability be succeeded.

The weight indeed of some of Lord Grey's objections consists in the departure from the system pursued by Lord Grey himself, and the administration with which he was connected in 1806; in order therefore to convert these objections into criminal charges against the present Government, it is necessary to establish the wisdom of the measures from which the deviation has taken place; it must be shewn indeed in the first place, that the system described by Lord Grey as the system of the ministers of 1806, was actually adopted and pursued by them; and secondly, that, under it, the country was,

on a comparison with the present moment, more prosperous and more safe, more formidable to its enemies, more useful to its allies, more respected by its friends.

An investigation therefore of the merits of the system alledged to have been criminally abandoned, becomes essential to the discussion of Lord Grey's subject; the degree not only of the importance to be attributed to his objections, but of the respect to be paid to his opinions, must necessarily be regulated by our estimate of the system which he extolls, and of the measures which he supported and pursued, when he sustained upon his own shoulders the burthen to which he considers others as unequal.

I.

The general charge of incompetency in the government to the perils of the moment, with which Lord Grey introduces his detailed accusations, ought, as it would seem, rather to have resulted from them; but, following his Lordship's arrangement, it may be here observed, that he entirely mistakes the nature, or perhaps rather the effect, of the feeling which prevails upon this subject.

It is true, that the conviction of the unprecedented power of our enemy, and of his inveterate hostility, has excited a pretty strong sensation of the necessity of a government, capable of calling forth with spirit and directing with energy the resources of the country. It is strongly and justly felt that the great exertions which the times make necessary, tend also to create a new danger at home. The restless and discontented persons, who must always exist in a country like England, will, in the pressure of the taxes, and in the occasional reverses incident to war, find wherewithal to excite to sympathy the immediate interests

and the feelings of the people. To meet this danger also, a strong government is necessary. There exists too a party, containing individuals of the first consideration in the country, whether for power, rank or talent; including some, by whom similar dangers have formerly been successfully resisted, and who have therefore obtained a hold upon the gratitude and good sense of the country; others by whom these dangers were at the same time fomented and encreased;—who have heretofore inflamed the baser passions of the many, and by such conduct excited a sort of meretricious affection. By the union, (owing to a concurrence of strange circumstances,) of these two descriptions of persons, an *opposition* is formed, not only possessing great numerical strength and great weight, but enjoying an important advantage in the very discordancy of its composition. Its adherents alternately avail themselves of each character, appealing sometimes to the memory of one great leader, and sometimes to that of his uniform opponent; sometimes taking credit for the wise measures which led the country through unexampled troubles, and sometimes lamenting the unsuccessful opposition to those measures, as the cause of our present misfortunes.

It is natural that a party possessing so much original and artificial strength, should be confident and presumptuous. Hence the refusal of its members to co-operate in the government with any of those to whom they were opposed, and the sanguine expectations expressed of obtaining power on their own terms;—by the continued existence of the government not only without their help, but in spite of their strenuous efforts, assisted by many adventitious circumstances, they have been disappointed in proportion to their former confidence. The pride however, which preserves their disappointment from sink-

ing into despair, renders it a new incentive to exertion.

Thus every feeling which can animate a body of men to pursue with eagerness and without regard to means, a favourite object, exists in the present opposition.

It may be added, that accidental circumstances have given rise to an unusual number of small parties in parliament, which lend their support to one or other of the great divisions, according to principles, the application of which it is not always easy to anticipate. An occasional assistance is thus often given to the systematic opposers, proving nothing as to the confidence reposed in them, but equally useful, in effect, with an encrease of their own numbers.

It has been often said, that an active and zealous party in opposition to the surrounders of the Throne, is almost an essential part of our practical constitution; but it is a prevalent and just opinion, sanctioned by experience and by the practice and sentiments of all our statesmen, that the government of the day ought to have a very decided predominance in the current proceedings of parliament; so that although frequent occasions may occur in which the existence of an administration is rendered dependent upon the votes of parliament; yet, that in the direction and arrangement of public measures, an administration possessing, generally, the confidence of parliament should be seldom thwarted; and especially, that ministers, satisfied in their own minds upon the more correct view of affairs which their situations enable them to take, that any strong or unusual measure would be essentially advantageous, they should not be restrained from pursuing it by a fearful doubt of the approbation of parliament.

It is not, then, any general disapprobation of the measures of government, nor any distrust of its natural competency to its duties, that has generated the expression of "active and loud complaint" to which Lord Grey refers. The complaint is, of an insufficient power of resistance to the too powerful opposition which I have described, and it is chiefly directed against those by whom that state of things has been created;—without renewing the discussion upon the rejection by Lord Grey and Lord Grenville of the overtures made to them in the autumn of 1809, it may be observed, that not to Mr. PERCEVAL and his colleagues, is to be attributed, that balanced state of parties, the true occasion of the call for a strong government, which Lord Grey mistakes for a disapprobation of the public measures of administration, and even impliedly, for a desire to restore the coalition of 1806,—a desire which Lord Grey himself will hardly represent as existing in much force in any part of the country. But whatever opinion may be entertained of the necessity of an united government, the people of this country feel no disposition to permit his Lordship's friends to avail themselves of the difficulties which they have themselves created, towards accomplishing the purposes of their own ambition.

II.

Lord Grey's next preliminary remark refers to the "sincere, unqualified, expressed concurrence" which his motion had received from Lord *Grenville*. Joining fully with Lord Grey in lamenting the cause of Lord Grenville's absence (at a moment especially when the country had been newly visited by the death of Mr. WINDHAM*!) I feel still more

* And why was Mr. Windham's death the cause of almost general regret? Had he, as a minister, enjoyed the confidence

strongly than his Lordship the deficiency occasioned by the illness of his colleague. The ability and eloquence of Lord Grey himself are amply sufficient for displaying in the strongest light the views which he entertains;—but it can scarcely be believed that Lord Grenville would have contented himself with seconding Lord Grey. Had the topics of the speech before us referred simply to recent measures, had the censures of Lord Grey been directed merely against the ministers whom they have concurred in opposing, it would have been sufficient for Lord Grenville to support his ally. But inasmuch as it is to "the system of our policy" during the whole period of our contest with France,—as well before the peace of Amiens as since it was set aside; and to the "short sighted policy" which inspired the cabinet of 1797, that Lord Grey has traced the dangers which now surround us; it unquestionably would have behoved Lord Grenville to have detailed the progress of his own opinions upon these important topics.

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of the country? Had he, as a popular leader, obtained the affections of the people? Do we trace to him, constitutional and financial reforms, or new projects of legislation? Is it as a *party* man that we esteem him, or do we love him as the representative of either PITT or FOX?—No.—We forget him as a minister, we put him out of sight as a partizan; but we remember that he never built his fame upon the applauses of the populace,—he "called a spade a spade;" HE *never pandered to the baser vices of the mob;* he was a man, and he sometimes deceived himself, but he never deceived the people. He felt strongly, that the dangerous encroachments in modern times were those, not of the Crown, but of the Subject; these therefore he manfully resisted. Those great men who saw the danger otherwise he duly respected; but he quickly detected, and despised, those whose inclination to the popular side was occasioned by vanity, caprice, or interest. To him, in fact, we looked as almost the only statesman for meeting, as they ought to be met, the representations of a *Wardle* and a *Burdett*, and (melancholy addition!) of a BANKES and a CANNING.

If we are not frightened at words, we must, in short, acknowledge that we love Mr. Windham as a sincere, open, and consistent TORY.

His characteristic manliness would no doubt have likewise induced him to imitate Lord Grey, in explaining minutely the opinions which he held in 1792, and the alterations which in the lapse of years they have naturally experienced, so as to bring him in 1810 to express a sincere and unqualified concurrence in Lord Grey's views of foreign policy, and principles of domestic reform. The history of the gradations by which these two statesmen have approximated, from extreme variance to perfect concurrence, would furnish an instructive lesson. It would warn us at least against appreciating the solidity of an argument, or the correctness of an opinion by the strength of the language in which it is expressed. It would teach us to receive with more qualification and distrust, declarations of irreconcileableness in political sentiment,—it would perhaps dispose us more favourably to political compromises, and certainly increase our abhorrence of political exclusionists.

III.

"In directing our minds to the difficulties under "which the country at this moment labours," Lord Grey conceives that "we are in the first place naturally urged to advert to the amount of the public "expenditure *;" and he is struck with the exorbitancy of its encrease from the peace establishment of 1792 to the war expenditure of 1810. Lord Grey's statement of this encrease was probably intended as a sort of oratorical introduction to fix the attention of his hearers. Lord Grey clearly did not mean to assume a fact like this as a proof of our danger, or of our incompetency to the exertions required of us; he is well aware that it is only by a *comparison* of our expenditure with our *revenues*, and with the resources

* Speech, p. 7.

from which those revenues are supplied, that any useful conclusion can be drawn. But he looks, it seems, to a failure of those resources; he is "appalled" by our taxation; by the grievous and oppressive means by which our revenue is collected; and, "ABOVE ALL, by the awful statement, made by "those most intimately conversant with such matters, that in this country taxation has arrived at a "height beyond which it could not well be carried; "that it has been extended almost to its fullest "reach; and that it has nearly attained its utmost "limits *." This "awful statement" has created a strong sensation in the country, and deserves an attentive consideration. It is most interesting, in its bearing upon the general state of the country, and I hasten to separate that, from the peculiar responsibility of the ministers. For the amount of our taxation, the present ministers are but in a small degree accountable; that they have but little encreased it, is in fact one of the charges adduced against them.—It is true that they have adopted measures for enforcing a more accurate and speedy collection of the taxes, and that some discontent has been occasioned thereby. It may, however, be fairly contended, not only that the amount of each contribution being fixed by the legislature, it is the duty of the executive government to take care that the quota of each individual is punctually paid, but that the enforcement of punctuality is advantageous to the individual. The postponement of the day of payment is likely to diminish the power of paying, by encouraging an individual to omit the tax in the calculation of his means; and an arrear of existing taxes must cause new impositions to fall with encreased hardship.

The introduction of a more rigid system of col-

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* Speech, p. 7.

lection must necessarily occasion an unusual pressure, in the first instance; and the Government has not lost sight of this obvious inconvenience. Steps have been taken * for mitigating the alledged evils, and removing whatever of rigour was unnecessary to the due collection; and (as will be seen hereafter) this unusual pressure has been among the motives which have induced a temporary forbearance from imposing new burthens.

I am confident that such forbearance has not been rendered necessary by the causes to which it is attributed by Lord Grey.—If I have formed a correct idea of the grounds of the opinion which he quotes, it is founded upon three considerations. 1st, That every branch of taxation has been largely encreased since 1792; 2dly, that one important duty is actually in a state of decay; and 3dly, that the attempts made of late years to carry through parliament new and productive taxes have been peculiarly unsuccessful.

Admitting the fact set forth in the first consideration, I disagree widely as to the conclusion drawn from it. So far from considering it as a proof of the exhaustion of our resources, I urge it as affording, on the other hand, the surest pledge of their remaining competency. It is perfectly true, that every principal article of revenue has been taxed once, twice, thrice, or more, since the commencement of the late war. If it can be shewn that these additions, generally speaking, have not produced an encrease of revenue, corresponding or nearly corresponding with the encrease of taxation; I will admit that a temporary incompetency in the article to a further encrease may fairly be deduced. But it is notorious, that the revenue, previously existing, has continued

* By the act 50 Geo. III. cap. 105.

to flourish under the weight of the new impositions. This is true in the aggregate and in the principal details. During the late war, as we all well remember, recourse was had repeatedly to every one of the most productive sources of revenue, including those which are most immediately affected by the internal state of the country, and less liable to the fluctuations of foreign commerce. Additions were made to the duties upon wine, tea, sugar, tobacco, salt, beer, horses and carriages, houses and servants. We all remember how regularly Mr. Pitt was warned, upon every occasion of encrease, that he was exhausting the country—that two and two, in financial calculations, do not make four. Yet persons conversant in finance must well know that the revenue, which was exposed to these repeated trials, was more productive at the close of the war than at its commencement. The weight of the new burthens in some instances, and the celerity with which the encreases were repeated, occasioned a temporary diminution. The new taxes seldom became productive at once; frightened at the encreased price, the people at first reduced their consumption; but it, I believe I may say invariably, recovered in one or two years. Without following the particular articles, it may be sufficient to observe, that while, as has been stated, the taxes which existed before the war had encreased in produce, the additions made to them exceeded, at the end of the war, the amounts at which they had severally been estimated.

When Mr. Pitt encreased the rate of an existing tax, he grounded his estimate of the produce of the addition, upon the produce of the existing tax, generally upon an average of three years. To prove, therefore, that the encrease had not affected the old tax, or, in other words, that the consumption was not diminished by the new one, it was sufficient to shew that the new tax was productive according to

the estimate thus formed. I do not pretend to say that this was uniformly the case; but it was the case in the greater number of instances, and, what is most important, it was true *on the whole.* The additions made to the revenue, for the purpose of meeting the new charges imposed during the late war, produced more than the estimated amount. This is in itself conclusive, in proving that at the commencement of the present war, no symptoms of exhaustion had appeared.

The present war commenced with an addition, in the shape of a war tax, upon all the principal articles of customs and excise. This immense addition, coming at once, had for a time the effect that might have been expected; the increase thereby occasioned, in the produce of the total revenue (permanent and temporary) did not immediately correspond with the estimate. The deficiency, however, was only temporary. A permanent addition was also made in the years of the war prior to 1807 to the assessed taxes, the stamp duties, several of the custom duties, salt, tea, and other duties of excise. These have also been upon the whole productive beyond the estimate.

From this period no important encrease of taxation has taken place.

It appears then that, for a period of eighteen years, the various modes adopted for encreasing our revenue have been generally successful; that large and repeated burthens have been imposed, without diminishing the power by which they are sustained.

I feel confident that every person conversant in finance will acquiesce in the correctness of my facts *;

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* It may be objected that my financial statements are not veri-

I will not attempt to reason upon them philosophically (nor indeed has it been attempted on the other side) but I build upon them a practical confidence, that there still remains in the revenue a capability of considerable extension. There is now no reason for apprehension, which has not existed during the whole period of hostility, and which did not on many occasions exist in a much higher degree. The minister in 1793 could not possibly have foreseen the immense additions which he should be enabled to make to the revenue; he would not when proposing the separate additions upon wine, tea or spirits, have ventured to predict that he would in the course of the war be enabled again and again to have recourse to the same expedient. There was in fact, a period about the middle of the war, when a very general apprehension prevailed, and some symptoms appeared of a financial failure. The difficulty was met with new expedients, and in two years the apprehension and the symptoms had disappeared!

Let him who is averse from financial details, and has been accustomed to consider the taxes only as they affect the price of articles of his daily consumption, call to mind (for instance) the repeated taxes upon *wine*. He will probably recollect that—"Mr. "Pitt has ruined the wine trade," and, "the mid-"dling classes are beginning to drink ale," were common expressions in the year 1795, when a new tax of ten pounds was laid upon a pipe of port. But

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fied by accounts and tables; but I am satisfied, that, however many persons conversant in finance may dispute my conclusions, it will not be said that I have adduced one doubtful fact. Perfectly to verify my facts, I must have produced a frightful multitude of figures. It is true that I might have easily given more abridged accounts, but such would have added nothing to the conviction of "the conversant;" while they ought not to have satisfied, and might have deceived, those who are not familiar with financial details.

does he find that he has since drank less wine, or that he meets with ale at the tables of his friends? And yet he may also remember that Mr. Pitt ventured to impose ten pounds more in 1796. And that in 1803 and 1804 successive additions were again made to the tax, and consequently to the price of wine.

That in the course of the contest with France, wine should have again become a resource, no man probably would have ventured in 1796 to predict. Wine had then reached "the utmost limits of taxation;"—and so it had, if we are to understand by the expression, only that at that moment the article was not an available, or at least not an adviseable object of taxation.

Without further details, I would wish the price and consumption of every article in general use to be in like manner considered. It will be found that upon no important article is there any symptom of a decreasing consumption.

I cannot therefore resist the conviction, that the only foundation upon which the desponders in finance rest their opinion, is quite unsubstantial; and that the appeal which has been made to the history of our taxation within eighteen years ought to produce a conclusion entirely opposite to that which Lord Grey has adopted.

It is not contended, that because we have borne much, we can therefore bear any thing; but it is denied, that any peculiar reason now exists for doubting of our capability. Every successive increase of burthen is an experiment of which the success is doubtful; the attempt would now be at least as auspicious as at former periods of the contest. The

success, in fact, of our experiments has in some measure afforded facilities to new attempts. For such is the immense amount of our present revenue, that a very small proportionate addition to its several parts would produce a very large aggregate sum *. And considering that, owing to the system of raising a large proportion of the supplies within the year, the amount of taxes which it is annually required to create or perpetuate, on account of loans, has not encreased in proportion to the encrease of the revenue, we might fairly now be considered as having readier means of finance than were possessed at preceding periods. A smaller addition to the existing taxes, would carry us through more years of war now, than at many of these former periods; in which experience now permits us to say, in contradiction to the predictions of the moment, our taxation had *not* "arrived at the height beyond which it could not "well be carried."

But there are in fact circumstances in our present financial state which would remove us very far from apprehension, although it were admitted that we could not, *at this moment*, readily encrease our revenues. Immense as these are, the *unmortgaged proportion* is great, very far indeed beyond former experience. In this very year, more than twenty-two millions are raised, which might, without even the imputation of a breach of faith with the public creditor, without neglecting any parliamentary pledge, and, without infringing in any degree upon the system of the sinking fund, be used as funds for raising money. It is not with a view of recommending that the unappropriated and war taxes should be so employed, that I mention them in this manner; there are very substantial reasons against such an arrangement. But

* An addition of one tenth would yield about five millions!

I hold that, in a general view, that country can scarcely be said to labour under great financial difficulties, which, besides ample provision for its public debts and civil establishments, and having a fund of redemption nearly equal to a fiftieth part of the debt, possesses an additional revenue not far short of that which is so applied. The more particular application of this important fact is this;—to shew that we have the means of *postponing* fresh taxation;—of giving to our resources a little more of repose, if it should be thought that they have not as yet recovered their growth, checked, as it is supposed to have been, by the measures of late years.

It might therefore be conceded, that the revenue was not, in 1809 or 1810, susceptible of a considerable encrease. The same might be granted during three, five, seven, succeeding years. We have still ample means of carrying on the war for the longest of those periods; and if we fear, that at its expiration, we could not return to a vigorous system of taxation, so as in a few years to restore our financial prosperity, we must shut our eyes to all experience, and especially to the history of the present contest.

But I am here putting an extreme case; all I require is, that it be borne in mind, that if a little further abstinence from taxation be really necessary, we have ample and unprecedented facilities of continuing that system of forbearance.

It may possibly be objected, that in opposing the statement of Lord Grey I have proved too much, and that my reasoning would lead to the conclusion, that the resources of finance are inexhaustible.

This proposition I will not maintain, nor in any view of the subject would it be necessary; but, I contend that they are as yet unexhausted and copious.

It is not contended by those who maintain the opinions which I oppose, that the country is in a state of decay; if indeed it were so, it would be as vain to build upon a continuance of our present revenue, as upon its encrease. It has, on the other hand, been distinctly asserted* to be in a state of progressive improvement. By this term, I trust, I may understand, that all the sources of revenue are gradually enlarging themselves. I may presume that our foreign trade and our manufacturies are expanding; that our consumption of the articles of necessity, convenience, and luxury is encreasing; that our domestic intercourse of every kind becomes daily more frequent; that our lands are rendered continually more productive; that our population encreases. All this I believe to be true, not only because our public accounts furnish ample evidence of its truth, but because the facts which I have mentioned of the gradual improvement of the revenue during nearly thirty years could scarcely have existed under another situation of the country. I well know that many would oppose to this conclusion the quantity of human misery which has during this period been witnessed amongst us; the encrease of poors' rates and of paupers; and the severity with which, in a great many instances, the taxes have pressed upon individuals.—Some even might be disposed to add, the frequency of commercial failures, though this, I think, is now pretty well understood to be the symptom of exuberant prosperity.—For a long series of years the two pictures which are here exhibited were opposed to each other by the sanguine and the despondent; the claims of these two representations long puzzled political economists. But since we have all become familiar with the writings of Mr.

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* Mr. Huskisson's Speech in the House of Commons, 16 May 1810.

Malthus, the difficulty has ceased to exist; we now understand the two situations to be so far from inconsistent, that the one is an unavoidable concomitant of the other.

The symptoms of progressive improvement, which I have described, are every one of them the resources of our taxation; *a state of progressive improvement*, is in fact synonimous with *a state in which taxes can be encreased.* I am convinced that nothing more could be meant by those upon whom Lord Grey relies, than that "it was not at this particular "year, or in the last, convenient or easy to impose "fresh taxes." Even this I cannot admit; but the matter is of little importance, because, in the general state of finance, and under the circumstances of progressive improvement which have been mentioned, the inability to point out at once an unobjectionable and productive source of revenue, is no proof whatever of a permanent or "appalling" failure of resources.

But it is understood that the arguments in proof of this failure have been supported by a reference to the diminished produce of an article of revenue no less important than *malt*, and its several products. I have reason indeed to believe that great stress has been laid upon this circumstance, and shall therefore consider it in more detail than its own importance, (diminished as it has been by the subsequent improvement of the produce) might appear to require.

If the causes of the deficiency in the produce of this duty were merely accidental, or if the deficiency itself were temporary, the fact can have no weight whatever. If, on the other hand, there has been truly a reduction in the quantity consumed, of an article so important among the more widely extended luxuries, the fact would materially affect the argu-

ment deduced from the improving state of the country. Now, in the first place, it is scarcely credible, that the pressure of taxation, and the consequent relinquishment of taxable commodities, should appear most strongly and most early in the liquors made from malt. The inconsistence of this fact, with the general habits of the people of England, ought, I conceive, to have led the gentlemen who set it forth to doubt the solidity of their ground. It ought, I conceive, to have put them upon enquiring, whether nothing but a reduced consumption of the article could have occasioned the diminution of the payments into the Exchequer; or, whether the reduction might not be the result of causes unconnected with taxation. Such an inquiry would have led immediately to the information that in the period from which their accounts were taken, a greater quantity of malt had been made and charged with duty than in the year with which the comparison was made; and that the diminution of the duties upon British spirits was the necessary result of the stoppage of the distilleries; the reduction upon beer was very trifling. It would have been discovered, moreover, that these diminutions of revenue were accompanied by a nearly corresponding encrease upon the article of sugar, substituted, in the distilleries, for barley.

This information might have been obtained at the moment in which the alarming deficiency was discovered; the accounts of the subsequent year will shew that the deficiency upon malt is disappearing, and that the duties upon foreign spirits and upon sugar have continued to flourish*.

* What is said above was correct at the period of Lord Grey's speech. It is hardly necessary to add, (because the fact is notorious) that the produce of the three quarters which have been completed since that time, has most amply justified this and every other statement, which was built upon the flourishing and encreasing state of the revenues.

Respect for the opinion of the reputed authors of the Statement, has induced me to enter into these particulars; but I apprehend, that, although they retain their ideas as to the difficulty of finding new taxes, they waver in their opinion of the growing deficiency of the old revenues.

The failure of the attempts of the administration of 1806, to introduce new objects of taxation, may, or may not be considered as a proof that no new sources can be found; according to our estimate of the financial acuteness of that administration. Thinking the discovery of new sources neither expedient nor necessary, it is useless to enquire whether it were practicable. The forbearance of the succeeding administration will be presently explained.

The grounds of the "awful statement" upon which, on account of the importance attributed to it by Lord Grey, I have bestowed, perhaps, too much attention, are not given by Lord Grey himself. But although he only refers us generally to "those most "intimately conversant with such matters," the expression is pretty well understood to designate Mr. Huskisson. It is therefore to the statements which, as I have been informed have been made by that gentleman, that my remarks have been applied. Mr. Huskisson's acknowledged talents and experience give him an unquestionable claim to confidence in matters of finance;—from those especially who have been educated in the same school, and connected with the same political measures. But the friends of Lord Grey and of the administration of 1806 may be disposed to ask for the opinion of their own luminaries in finance,—some of the denouncers of the "improvident and impolitic system" of which Mr. Huskisson was the official promoter. For other financial statements, Lord Grey cites Lord Lauderdale

and Lord LANSDOWNE; the one a very old writer on opposition finance; the other the ostensible author of the celebrated PLAN. Do these noblemen, does Lord LANSDOWNE especially, concur in the "awful "statement?"—Is Lord GRENVILLE—is Mr. *VANSITTART* "appalled" by our taxation? If there be no reason for believing that any one of these distinguished individuals has adopted the views of Mr. Huskisson, the admirers of the coalition and its *Plan* will probably, for that reason, distrust them. Persons who are accustomed to draw their own conclusions will reject those of Mr. Huskisson, as totally unsupported by experience or analogy.

The preceding observations apply not so much to the measures of government, as to the state of the country; but in a subsequent part of the speech the financial arrangements of the last four years are severely censured. As for the want of a "*systematic* "*arrangement* of finance," which Lord Grey makes a ground of charge, I must, on the part of the ministers, plead guilty. They certainly have not attempted to delude the people by opening the budgets of twenty years to come, or by pretending to apply a fixed and permanent arrangement to what is in its own nature fluctuating and uncertain.

To the charges founded on the financial arrangements of 1807, a more particular answer is required. "In the first year of their administration, the mi-"nister who had the care of the finances carried into "effect the arrangements of his predecessor, so far "as it served his purpose, that is, he charged the "interest of 12 millions upon the war taxes, *without* "*adopting the other* REMEDIAL *parts of the system**."

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* Speech, P. 32.

By the system here alluded to, the loans of 1807 and of the subsequent years were to have been charged upon the war taxes; but, as a sort of compensation for this diversion of the war taxes, a sinking fund of *five* per cent. (redeeming its principal in 14 years) was to have been substituted for the ordinary sinking fund of *one* per cent. (operating in 45 years.) By this arrangement it was calculated the mortgage of the war taxes would continue only 14 years from the period of each loan charged upon them.—Charging the loan upon the war taxes, was, *primâ facie*, a departure from the *provident system* which had been pursued since the commencement of the war; to *remedy* this evil, the larger sinking fund was adopted. It was a part of the same plan, to authorize, by a prospective enactment, the future application to purposes other than those to which they then stood pledged, the several sinking funds created since 1786, including that which was to have been created by the plan. The obvious tendency of this provision was to counteract, in some degree, the *remedial* part of the new system.

When Mr. Perceval became chancellor of the Exchequer, a loan had already been negociated upon the understanding, that the sinking fund should be five per cent. to be charged, with the interest, upon the war taxes; this arrangement, therefore, he completed; but he went no further into the proposed system. The effect of this proceeding was to adopt the primary *improvidence* of the new plan, to adopt also the *remedy* proposed, rejecting only the prospective regulation for destroying the effect of that remedy. He mortgaged, in short, the same amount of war taxes proposed by Lord Henry Petty, leaving the sinking fund, the most striking feature in provident finance,—equal in extent and more strict in its limi-

tation.—I cannot enter further into this subject, without running into the mazes of the "Plan of "Finance," which is quite unnecessary, as it is not at all likely to be again brought forward; but I am confident that any one of the five or six persons, who successfully attempted to understand its bearings, and among these Mr. Huskisson most chiefly, will assure Lord Grey that he has been led into a very complete mistake.

In arraigning the financial measures of 1808, Lord Grey is correct in point of fact. It is very true that the sum advanced by the Bank, in consequence of the suggestions of the committee of finance, considerably reduced the amount of the loan of that year. It is equally true, that the reduced charge was met, partly by a reduction in the allowance to the Bank for management, and partly by the diminution of the charge upon the consolidated fund, by the expiration of the short annuities.—It must therefore be confessed, that Lord Grey has satisfactorily proved, that the labours of the minister of finance in 1808 were less than, under other circumstances, they might have been! A serious and statesman-like charge! —But Mr. Perceval is not only censured, because he neither sought nor created important difficulties; but because he met those which were unavoidable, by no expedients "very novel and ingenious." What else can be the meaning of the *sneer*, with which the small encrease of the assessed taxes is noticed by Lord Grey? Surely, the true and only consideration is, whether the expedients were fit for their purpose! Yet, little consonant as this language is, with the gravity of Lord Grey's subject, or with his usual style, the astonishment created by its perusal must encrease, when we recollect that this "expedient" (which was very frequently adopted by Mr. Pitt) was that to which the colleagues of Lord Grey were

driven in 1806, when two new taxes * successively proposed had been rejected by the house of Commons.

As to the measures of 1809, Lord Grey states correctly that the loan was charged upon the war taxes, although it is not easy to comprehend what is meant by the "unheard of amount" of this mortgage, seeing that it was rather below the precedent furnished by Lord Henry Petty in 1807.

The present year 1810, has again passed without new impositions upon the people; the new charges having been provided for by an unforeseen influx of revenue from the means of a former year.

It is perfectly true, that on no former occasion, was an excess of this sort made use of in a subsequent year; the reasons upon which the measure was adopted in the present instance, are in part similar to those which dictated the mortgage of a portion of the war taxes in 1809, and in part rest upon facts peculiar to the case.

With reference to the former, it must be acknowledged that there is great difficulty in fixing any amount of war taxes, which may be mortgaged with due regard to the permanent interests of finance; at the same time a very general and a just idea has of late prevailed, that in our system of providing for future generations we were proceeding almost too fast for ourselves, and that some relaxation might fairly be allowed †.

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* Upon iron, and upon private breweries.

† The detail into which Lord Grey enters upon the subject of finance, having made it necessary for me to appropriate to that topic, a larger portion of this tract than I should have wished, I refrain from offering the private opinions which I have formed

The general considerations too, which I have applied to the history of our taxation, strongly recommend a temporary rest from imposition, in order that the real state of our resources might be undeniably established, by an average of years in which no new taxes had been imposed. An expectation had been held out in 1807, that for three years there were to be no new taxes; this expectation was answered in 1807; in 1808, the amount required, being (for the reasons given) particularly small, an increase of tax took place; 1809 and 1810 completed the three years of forbearance. Since, however, many persons objected to the further mortgage of the war taxes, it was considered more adviseable to appropriate to the charge of the latter year, a very unexpectedly and unusually large excess which took place in the produce of the stamps, in consequence of the measures adopted in 1808.

On this subject, Lord Grey has recourse to the authority of another gentleman " conversant in mat-

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upon ten years consideration of the subject.—But I must be permitted to avail myself of this opportunity of expressing my earnest hope and expectation, that in any arrangement which may be made for relaxing, to the benefit of the present time, the system of taking upon ourselves the burthens which for nearly a century it has been usual to throw upon posterity—it may be remembered that the pledge (by which I mean, not a pledge to the *Stockholder* but to the country gentleman,) which, as well for priority as solemnity, is most to be regarded is that by which the *sinking funds* were established; that any inconvenience which according to some, is now occasioned by the sinking fund, may be attributed, as it justly ought, not to the original establishment of the fund, but to the excess to which it was carried by the act of 1802: and that the remedy may accordingly be applied only to the evil, and not extended to the destruction of the general system, which, since the period mentioned, has not been disturbed, and which is, that *forty-five years* shall be the utmost limit of time for which the revenues of the country shall be mortgaged, and that the provision made for preserving that limit shall not be set aside for any temporary purpose.

"ters of finance," who has urged as "a strong and "unanswerable objection, that the public creditor "has a right to the whole security, because the in-"terest of all stock created by any loan, being "charged upon the consolidated fund generally, the "surplus of any one duty should go to make up the "deficiency of another *." This is true; the creditor has a right to expect that the fund upon which his annuity is charged, that is, *the consolidated fund generally*, should be, as a whole, amply competent to all charges upon it. Having thus stated this principle, of which he sufficiently marks the origin, Lord Grey proceeds to a calculation, furnished, there can be very little doubt, from the same quarter. In this calculation, of course, the whole charge upon this consolidated fund generally, is stated on one side; and the whole revenue applied to it, on the other.—No such thing—the statement which Lord Grey has been advised to introduce into his speech, is an account of the new charge imposed, and new increase carried to the fund, within the last *seven* years; from which statement it appears, that, (allowing for the recent appropriation of the stamps) the excess upon the whole would be inconsiderable, and certainly not sufficient to meet the ordinary fluctuations.

There is a disingenuousness in this proceeding, of which it is impossible to suspect Lord Grey. The whole force of the statement rests upon this arbitrary selection of *seven* years; looking to "the whole security," it would have been found that the public creditor had a surplus of more than *four millions* moderately calculated, after making every allowance for unusual receipts. But if this obviously just method had escaped the calculator, it is difficult to conceive what

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* Speech, p. 34.

motive, but the desire to paint a dark picture, could have led him to that which he has adopted. The account from which the sums were taken, is quite clearly the account of the new income and charge for *ten* years, that being the period during which the accounts in this form are laid before parliament. Why were the first three years of the period, which would have added more than two millions to the surplus, carefully excluded from the calculation?

Thus much, upon Lord Grey's specific charges; the general encrease of expenditure since 1806, is readily admitted. But as it is equally undeniable, that the *extent* of our exertions has proportionally encreased, the true question which here arises—whether these exertions have been *politic*,—will, as a political question, be elsewhere discussed.

Lord Grey concludes his financial exposition, by an expression of apprehension at the amount of our *peace* establishment, as compared with our means. Although I am inclined to suspect that he under-rates the probable expenditure, I cannot participate in his distrust of the latter. The mode in which, under such circumstances, it would be adviseable to avail ourselves of the peculiar state of our Finance, must depend upon contingencies, which it is now quite impossible to foresee. If we can resist hostilities extended like the present, and directed particularly against our commerce and resources of finance, we need not anticipate difficulties and deficiencies in time of peace.

But I have said enough on Finance; I trust that I have shewn that Lord Grey, who was never supposed to give much attention to this subject, has been very badly advised upon it;—that in that more important part of the subject which regards the general situation of the country, he has adopted an opinion

formed without sufficient grounds by one individual, whose authority, however great, is insufficient to bear down at once the evidence of facts, and the opinions of nearly all others "conversant in finance;"—and, that in making his specific charges against the ministers, he has been misled into errors so considerable, and statements so suspicious, as entirely to destroy the weight of the accusation.

IV.

Although the opinions which Lord Grey has adopted on the subject of finance have created in his mind a strong feeling of the necessity of repose, he has distinctly stated that he conceives a safe and honourable peace to be at present unattainable.—In supporting this opinion he has employed more eloquence and force than in any topic of his speech; but it is not upon the heads of his opponents that the heavy weight of his oratory must fall; it is directed rather against his chosen friends;—against Mr. *Whitbread* and Mr. *Roscoe* *, who have not been convinced even by the experiment of Lord Grey himself, that any thing but the mismanagement of our administration, has averted peace from the country, from the year 1806 *inclusive*.

But Lord Grey, disclaiming any disposition to presume an unwillingness in ministers to avail themselves of a favourable opening for negociation, nevertheless, "most strongly feels that *their conduct has* "*been such, as almost to remove from us every hope* "*of peace*." To what part of the conduct of Go-

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* This gentleman has publickly censured that part of Lord Grey's speech which relates to peace with France, in "Brief Observations on the address to His Majesty proposed by Earl Grey "in the House of Lords."

vernment Lord Grey here directs his censure, it is impossible to divine. It will readily be admitted, that the opposition which Bonaparte is still encountering in the Spanish Peninsula, has created a difficulty in the way of peace, which did not exist in 1806; but I believe, that amongst all the loud, various, and inconsistent criminations which have been urged against the conduct of Government upon that unexpected event, it has not yet been objected that, by assisting in the check given to the ambitious views of France, we retarded the event of Peace! If, at least, such an objection has been urged, it will scarcely be adopted by Lord Grey, whose conviction of the futility of attempts at pacification is founded upon the enormous power of Bonaparte, and his determination to direct against Great Britain the strength acquired by the extension of his power in every other country in the world. It surely cannot be to the encreased energies that the ministers have exerted in preventing a "great accession of power to "our enemy by the subjugation of the Peninsula *," that Lord Grey alludes with censure, as removing the hope of Peace.

It is as difficult to comprehend, how he can find a similar objection, in the conduct of Government towards neutral powers. Lord Grey thinks that neutrals have been treated with severity; such conduct may be, in itself, right or wrong: but in his present view at least Lord Grey can hardly allude to proceedings by which Peace, between France and England, is made the interest of every other power upon earth.

Is it then to the diplomatic communications of the present ministers that Lord Grey objects, as remo-

* Speech, p. 13.

ving the hopes of peace?—Does he in this part of their conduct discover a criminal deviation from his own system?—Let us review the facts.

The negociation of 1806 convinced Lord Grey that the unreasonable demands and expectations of Bonaparte * rendered peace unattainable. This had long been the general feeling †; nor is it easy to discover in the discussions of 1806, any very new or striking proof of the difficulty of making peace with France. If we are not to consent to any terms of peace, until Bonaparte has satisfied us that he is no longer ambitious of universal dominion, or able to pursue his schemes of aggrandizement, it is difficult to justify the motives by which Lord Grey and his friends were actuated in negociating with him upon any terms, or even in opposing the renewal of hostilities in 1803. At that period, Mr. Fox and Lord Grey saw no reason for going to war ‡; in 1806, they thought that peace would have been desirable "*if it could have been obtained without any important* "*sacrifices, which should place us in a worse situation* "*as to the renewal of a war, to which we might be* "*provoked by the injustice of our enemy* §."

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* Some forcible observations upon Lord Grey's altered opinion in this respect were urged by Mr. Canning in his speech of 5 Jan. 1808. [Cobbett's Debates, VIII. p. 374-5.]

† In this feeling however, (putting out of the question the unexpected turn of affairs in Spain and Portugal,) I must be permitted to say that I do not concur. The grounds of my difference with that which, I am quite aware, is the opinion of nearly every man to whom I look up with respect, will be stated in the sequel.

‡ Mr. Grey moved to leave out of the address proposed in the House of Commons on the breaking out of the war, the paragraph which referred to the *restless spirit of ambition* in the enemy, as the cause of the war. [Debates, 25 May, 1803.]

§ Lord Howick's speech in the House of Commons, 5 Jan.

The negociation, however, which was commenced upon this principle, was brought to an end in consequence of the refusal of France to admit the state of possession to remain, in all respects, exactly as it stood, and to satisfy the reasonable demands of our allies—in regard more particularly, to *Sicily* and *Dalmatia* *.

The discussions in which Lord Grey's successors have been concerned, have turned only upon one of the points of the former negociation;—our continental alliances. In April 1807, the British Government accepted the proffered mediation of Austria, with the proviso that the negociation should be common to all the powers at war †. The matter however dropped, no further communication being received from the Austrian minister, and that power having shortly afterwards placed herself in a situation so dependent upon France ‡, as to render her quite incapable of the character of a mediator.—The offer was however renewed in November §, without any

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1807. [Cobbett's Parliamentary Debates VIII. p. 306.] From this speech [p. 324] as well as from the papers laid before Parliament, it appears to have been Mr. Fox's opinion, as well as that upon which the cabinet acted, that the three essential points were Hanover, (as a point of honour) the Russian connection, and Sicily. Surely, all these points might have been conceded by France, without removing that want of *security* which appears to be, in the opinion of Lord Grey and others, the present obstacle in the way of peace.

* Lord Howick's speech, and the King's Declaration of 21 Oct. 1806, throughout.

† Mr. Canning's note to Prince Starhemberg, 25 April 1807. [Austrian Papers presented in 1808, No. 3.]

‡ See Mr. Canning's speech, 29 Feb. 1808. [Cobbett's Debates, X. p. 868.]

§ P. Starhemberg to Mr. Canning, 20 Nov. [Austrian Papers, No. 2.]

reference to the prior conditional acceptance, and under circumstances which rendered the mediatorial character still less applicable than before, to the Emperor Francis *.

In August 1807, immediately after the conclusion of the treaty of Tilsit †, the Emperor Alexander also offered his mediation ‡. His offer was accepted upon the condition of "a statement of the basis upon "which the enemy was disposed to treat, and a com-"munication of the articles of the peace of Tilsit §." To this request no attention was paid by Russia,—who shortly afterwards became our enemy ||.

"With the rejection of the Russian offer," (or rather with the conditions by which its acceptance was accompanied,) "Lord Grey was, at the time, "*not disposed to find much fault* ¶." Nor, in fact, does the blame which he at the same time imputed to the rejection of the offers of Austria, rest upon grounds which could possibly justify the general im-

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* The Austrian minister made a communication on the part of the *French* government, from which, apparently, and not from his own court, he had received his instructions. Mr. Canning's note, 8 Jan. 1808, [Same papers, No. 6.] On the 12th, P. Starhemberg demanded his passports, which were immediately forwarded.

† The treaty between France and Russia is dated 7th July 1807.

‡ M. Alopeus to Mr. Canning, 1st August 1807. [Russian Papers presented in 1808, No. 4.]

§ Mr. Canning's answer, 5th Jan. [No. 5.] and His Majesty's declaration, 18 December 1807.

|| Emperor of Russia's declaration against England, 31st Oct. 1807.

¶ His speech in the House of Lords, 11 Feb. 1808. [Cobbett's Debates, X. p. 435.]

putation of which I am now endeavouring to trace the foundation *.

In October 1808, a joint offer of negociation was received from France and Russia †; to which the English government, having recently espoused in the most public manner, the cause of the Spanish nation, naturally refused to listen until it should have been distinctly admitted that the Representative of that nation, (as well as the Courts of Sicily, Portugal and Sweden,) was to be a party in the negociation, as His Majesty's ally ‡.—To this proposed acknowledgement, the two governments objected §, and the discussion was of course concluded ||.

In the short parliamentary discussion to which this proceeding gave rise, Lord Grey took no part; nor

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* It is chiefly to the *tone* adopted by Mr. Canning that Lord Grey objected.—This might have encreased ill-will on the part of Austria, but could not have rendered France more averse from peace.—It is impossible to mention the tone of Mr. Canning's diplomatic papers, without recollecting that the language of his public declarations was one of the leading causes of the early popularity which the Duke of Portland's administration obtained.

† Letter from Bonaparte and the Emperor Alexander, to His Britannic Majesty, dated Erfurth, 12 October 1810. [Erfurth Papers, presented 20 January 1809, No. 4.]

‡ Mr. Canning's note to the Russian and French ministers, 28 Oct 1808. [Same Papers, No. 9.]

§ Notes from Count Nicholas de Romanzow, and M. Champagny, dated 28 Nov. 1808. [Nos. 13 and 15.]

|| Mr. Canning's notes in reply, dated 9th December [Nos. 17 and 19.] The British ministers on this occasion issued a declaration (15 December 1808) which is at least not inferior to their other state papers. It is very worthy of attention not only on account of the solemn pledge which it publicly renews to Spain, but of the just reasoning which it contains as to the evil effects of a negociation, continued "when peace has been found to be "utterly unattainable."

were the few observations of Lord *Grenville** directed against the principle upon which ministers had acted.

The question then of Peace or War has for the present ceased to exist among those who are not prepared to abandon the cause of Spain; unless, indeed, it be conceived that any offers which we might make to Bonaparte would induce him to secure the independence of the Peninsula; an idea, which, I believe, has never been expressed.

However apprehensive and, as I trust I shall shew, unreasonably apprehensive, is Lord Grey's feeling, of the subjugation of Spain, and however unwilling he may be that the force of this country should be exerted towards preventing it, he certainly has never expressed his willingness, that Great Britain, at this moment, should become a party to that dreaded consummation, by a treaty acquiescing in the usurpation of France.

Does it not then, on the whole, appear that the objections formerly made by Lord Grey to the proceedings of his opponents in regard to peace were in their nature occasional, and have now lost their force?—that those proceedings are not to be contrasted with his own?—and that, upon the importance of the great obstacle which has newly occurred, there is no substantial and practical difference?

His inculpatory remark upon the conduct of ministers in respect to peace, is not borne out by any one proceeding, to which, in the absence of all explanation, it is possible to refer his allusion;—and is

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* 26 Jan. 1809. [Cobbett, XII. p. 169] Even Mr. *Whitbread*, in this instance admitted that negociation was out of the question. [31 Jan. 1809, p. 222.]

therefore to be classed among the specimens of that "vague and general phraseology in which" some speakers "delight."

And, most assuredly the observations upon this topic ought not reasonably to lead to either of the desired results of his speech—a change of measures or of men.

V.

Considering then, that the state of our finances calls loudly for repose, (an opinion which I have endeavoured to disprove,) but that peace, upon adviseable terms, is not to be attained, (a point upon which there is a general concurrence,) Lord Grey recommends, as if it were the natural result of his opinions, the mode of conducting the war, which shall approach most nearly to a state of peace;—he deprecates *offensive operations* as inconsistent with the "provident system of husbanding our resources;"—and he illustrates his views by a comparison of the systems of policy of the two administrations, and of the effect of each upon the contest in which we are engaged.

To every part of Lord Grey's view of our warlike policy, I venture to object. I not only contend that there is no necessity for "Repose," so strong as to induce us to abstain from any military exertions, which appear to be required by the interests of the country;—I deny that a defensive war is the natural policy of a nation wishing for peace, but not able to attain it;—and more especially, when the obstacle to peace is, the great and encreasing, but not universal power, the inordinate, but occasionally disappointed ambition, of an enemy. But the general reasoning into which these considerations would lead, shall give way to a more practical discussion.

Lord Grey, though he delights not in "vague and "general phraseology," admits, with Lord Liverpool, that the comparative merits of one political system or another must be determined by the circumstances and situation of the country; and is therefore willing to join issue in the question*, whether the operations of Government, acting upon what he is pleased to term a "system of vigour," have tended more to a "successful termination of the contest," than "that "provident system of husbanding our resources," which he assures us, was the policy, "*once so reviled*," of his own administration.

Here then is a direct challenge to a comparative investigation. But let us first of all discover and explain wherein really consisted this "reviled" policy. From the "general phraseology" of Lord Grey, which it is humbly conceived may not unfairly be also termed "vague," it would naturally be collected, that it was the first object of this policy to abstain from military operations,—to avoid, especially, hazarding a British army on a hostile continent; and, at least, it would be taken for granted, that none of those prudent operations, which the course of events rendered imperative, could with any plausibility have been said to have "covered our national character "with disgrace."

Yet the recollection of no less than four distinct proceedings of the cabinet of 1806, compels us to dissent from this representation of its political system; and calls for an investigation of every operation undertaken by either government; an investigation without which, neither the policy of Lord Grey, nor the fatal abandonment of it by his successors, can be known or appreciated.

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* Speech, p. 16.

It certainly was the system of the cabinet of 1806 to undertake no extensive operations; the present ministers, on the other hand, have directed to the purposes of the war a portion of the strength of the country large beyond example *. In so doing they have unquestionably encreased the public expences, and they may therefore, less appropriately than the coalition, be said to have "husbanded the resources "of the country."

But how far this sort of husbandry is meritorious, may well be questioned. If the merits of a political system are to be appreciated solely by its cost, it would not be easy to justify even that reduced scale of expence which in 1807 the ministers had persuaded themselves to consider as sufficient. To measure our exertions exactly by our means, may appear a prudent and a sound maxim, but very little reflexion is necessary to shew that it is in no way reducible to practice. If we are said to exceed our means when we run in debt—the most reduced scale

* This averment, I trust, will not be disputed. I believe that it would be true, even if we were to leave out of the calculation the other services upon which British troops were at the same time employed, and confine ourselves to the Peninsular war. To the unusual exertions of the present administration, a testimony has been lately borne, by an officer of remarkable intelligence, as will, I apprehend, be acknowledged, not only by officers with whom he has served, but by all those members of the House of Commons who attended the Scheldt enquiry. The principles upon which our expeditions have been, and ought to be conducted, have been laid down with great judgement by Captain *Pasley* of the Engineers, in his "Essay on the Military Policy and Institu-"tions of the British Empire." No one, who peruses this book, can possibly attribute to Captain Pasley, any party views. He does not exempt the present ministers from his general charges of impolicy in the conduct of the war, but he freely acknowledges that their "efforts in the Spanish war have been *greater than any* "*exhibited by our military history in these latter times*," [p. 195.] Looking only to the numbers of British troops actually employed, we may include in these *latter times* the wars of Anne, and George II.

of war establishment places us in that situation;—if on the other hand we consider ourselves as living within our means, unless we are actually ruined, and unable to continue the same exertions, the largest establishments hitherto adopted have not reduced us to that extremity. Who then shall fix the medium between "*short sighted parsimony*" and "*unforeseeing expence?*"*—It is beyond the power of man. The establishment of a systematic policy, by which all that we are to do, and the means of doing it, is limited and arranged for many years to come, appears perhaps to be the part of a great statesman; it is most consistent with the pride of the rulers of a nation, and with the self-conceit which induces men to fancy that they foresee and appreciate or even regulate events, which are in truth the results of accident and caprice. But whatever degree of weight may be attached to this observation in general, it will surely be admitted that the mutual relations of exertion and expence have never yet been defined by the most systematic politician, so as to appreciate, with any approach to accuracy, the value at which any political object may wisely be purchased, or the degree of risk which may justifiably be incurred in its pursuit.

With these ideas, I shall not attempt to estimate financially the two systems which, as Lord Grey imagines, have been adopted since 1806. Upon the expediency, conduct, and result, of the several measures adopted by the two administrations, I am nevertheless willing and anxious to "go to issue" with Lord Grey.

The most striking feature, however, in the policy

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* Burke.

of the cabinet of 1806, consists not in a service undertaken, but in an operation refused to the pressing instances of an ally, supported by a pretty general voice at home. Were it my object to bring prominently forward, the most popular topic of crimination against Lord Grey and his colleagues, I might content myself with a simple reference to their discussions with Russia; but it is not so much for the purpose of crimination, as of an elucidation of their policy, that I wish to record the History of those transactions.

After the Peace of Presburgh *, by which an end was put to the war between France and Austria, Russia still continued the contest. But it was not till October 1806, when Prussia † also became the enemy of France, that the war in the North became serious. The King of Prussia's declaration of war

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* 26 December 1805.

† Prussia does not form a topic of our discussion, but it may be as well to mention, here, that England and Prussia had been at war from the month of April 1806, [orders in council for laying an embargo on Prussian vessels, &c. 5th and 6th April 1806—King's message announcing the rupture, 21st April]; in consequence of the latter having taken possession of Hanover, by a proclamation dated 27th January, [Prussian Papers 1806, No. 2.] and having on the 28th of March [No. 5.] excluded British ships from the ports in the North Sea. The addresses to His Majesty on this occasion, passed, in both houses, unanimously. Mr. Fox said in his introductory speech that "*the shutting the* "*ports of Prussia to British vessels was, alone, most clearly and* "*unquestionably an act of hostility against this country.*" [Cobbett's Debates, VI. p. 893.] His Britannic Majesty also issued a declaration on the 25th April, in his electoral capacity. [New Annual Register for 1806, p. 165.] The King of Prussia's subsequent rupture with France, appears to have been occasioned principally by the offer of *Hanover*, made by France to England in the negociations at Paris in the summer of 1806. [King of Prussia's manifesto, 9th Oct. 1806, New Annual Register, p. 259.]

was almost instantly followed by a defeat *, the consequences of which need not be recalled! Upon receiving intelligence of the unfortunate opening of the Prussian campaign, Lord Howick instructed the King's ministers at the courts of Petersburgh and Stockholm, not only to press most urgently for the application of all the forces of Russia and Sweden in aid of the Continental war, but to assure those two powers of "His Majesty's steady determination *to "resist, to the utmost of his power, all pretensions "inconsistent with the general interests of Europe*†." To *Sweden*, indeed, the British Government said, a little more specifically, that "*the common danger had "animated* His Majesty *with an increased conviction "of the necessity of using his most powerful efforts "to avert it* ‡."—The Emperor of Russia on his part, after he had brought forward his forces to the Vistula, pressed urgently and continually for the active co-operation of England. The answer given in London to these representations was, generally, that

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* At Jena on the 14th of October. From this period the war was uniformly unfavourable to Prussia; an armistice was signed at Charlottenburgh on the 16th of November, and a treaty of peace finally concluded at Tilsit on the 9th of July 1807. [New Annual Register 1807, pp. 230 and 272.] In consequence of the King of Prussia's rupture with France, and the consequent arrival of Baron Jacobi in London on the 10th of October 1806, an order in council had been issued, 19th November, for ceasing to molest Prussian vessels; and on the 28th Jan. 1807, Peace was concluded at Memel between England and Prussia. [New Ann. Reg. 1807, p. 248.] Prussia has subsequently entered again into the hostile measures of France, and has broken off all diplomatic communication with us.—I do not mention these facts and dates with any intention whatever of joining in the insinuations, thrown out at the time, on the conduct of Lord Grey and his colleagues in respect of Prussia. [See the Debate in the House of Commons, 19 Dec. 1806. Cobbett, VIII. p. 41, &c.]

† Lord Howick to Mr. Stuart, 28th Oct. and 4th Nov. 1806. [Russian Papers, Feb. 1808, Nos. 1 and 3.]

‡ Lord Howick to Mr. Pierrepont, 28th Oct. [No. 2.]

"the same opinion was entertained there as at St. "Petersburgh, of *the necessity of* COMBINED EX-"ERTIONS *to resist the encreasing danger* *."

But the dispatches received from the successive British ministers at Petersburgh, throughout January and February 1807 †, having continued to represent the extreme anxiety of the Emperor for diversions on the coasts of France and Holland, and his uneasiness at the apparent silence of our Government on the subject, Lord Howick, on the 20th of February answered, more distinctly, by referring to "the dif-"ficulty and danger of landing in France, where the "means exist of collecting in a short time a much "larger force than any that can be sent against this "country, and from whence there can be no secure "retreat;—but still holding out, that, "if a favour-"able opportunity should arise, His Majesty *would be* "*desirous of exerting his* UTMOST EFFORTS *to distress* "*the enemy upon any point which may present an* "*advantageous opening to assist the general opera-*"*tions of the war* ‡."—Russia becoming every day more and more urgent, Lord Howick, on the 10th of of March, went so far as to say, that "*a more favour-*"*able season* (for military diversions) *was now ap-*"*proaching*; that the British Government was *sedu-*"*lously employed in preparing the means of still more* "*active co-operation* §."—"He hoped, too, soon to "be able to communicate something *more specific*

* Lord Howick to the Marquis of Douglas, 4th Dec. 1806. [No. 10.]

† Mr. Stuart to Lord Howick, 18th Dec. 1806—received 22d Jan. 1807. 2d Jan,—received 6th Feb. 14th Jan,—received 27th Feb.—Lord Douglas, 26th Jan. 4th and 8th Feb. [Nos. 11, 12, 14, 15, 16 and 17.]

‡ Lord Howick to Lord Douglas, 20 Feb. 1807. [No. 20.]

§ It is not clear, to what operation, previously undertaken, this *comparative degree* is intended to refer.

"on this subject," although he thought it necessary to moderate the expectations which these expressions might justify, by reminding the Russian Government "how much the force of which His Majesty could "dispose for continental operations was necessarily "limited, both by the extent of his naval exertions, "and the necessary support of his distant colonies; "and how much the difficulty of employing it ad-"vantageously was encreased by the then situation "of the North of Germany, where His Majesty "could neither look to the junction of his army with "that of any ally, to any established magazines to "enable it to advance, nor to the possession of any "considerable fortress to secure its retreat *."—To the King of Sweden, who, as it would appear, was equally with Russia, "dissatisfied at our supposed "backwardness in assisting his exertions," our minister at Stockholm was on the same day instructed to repeat "the opinion already expressed on the part "of the English Government, that a diversion by a "Swedish force on the side of Pomerania would be "at that moment of the utmost importance; and to "discuss with that monarch in person, the addition "of British troops which would be required;"—and "the amount of subsidy demanded;"—but Lord Howick at the same time required "a general com-"munication of his plan of operation,"—of the force destined to execute it, and of the time when it would be ready to act, "and urged His Majesty's" right to expect further details, considering how largely he was expected to *contribute his support* †."

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* Lord Howick to Lord Douglas, 10th March. [No. 22.]

† Lord Howick to Mr. Straton, 16th March 1807. [No. 23.] There is in this and other papers, too much of an air of *supporting* an ally, as if for his own sake, instead of co-operating with him in a common interest.

This abstract of the published communications of Lord Grey himself, with respect to military operations on the Continent, is not brought forward with a view of supporting the charges preferred against the cabinet of 1806, for not sending a force to the North of Germany. But it is not by a reference to *the system of husbanding our resources* that this accusation is repelled, but because it has never been satisfactorily made out, that at any specific period, or in any particular quarter, it would have been politic to land a British army. It was not, in fact, upon any new or peculiar ground of prudent policy, that Lord Grey and his colleagues justified their conduct, either to their allies, or subsequently in their own parliament *. The diplomatic pieces which we have just retraced, imply and indeed express, throughout, a determination to contribute largely to the measures of the war; without which determination, in fact, it would have been almost ridiculous to call upon our allies, in the urgent style adopted by Lord Howick, for *their* powerful succours, and the application of all *their* forces, to that we emphatically styled the common cause.

But, in pursuing this topic further, we do find some traces of the "prudent policy." We find, it is true, no measure, of unquestionable expediency, abandoned for the sake of "husbanding our resources;" yet we recognize a caution against the occurrence of useless expence, which may not unfairly be deemed excessive: and which, if the war had taken a turn which admitted of the co-operation

* See the speeches of Lord Grey and Lord Moira on the motion of the former for papers relative to Russia, 11 Feb. 1808. [Cobbett, X. p. 436—441.]

of our troops, might have produced much delay and inconvenience *.

But, out of the papers which have been cited, a more serious observation arises.—Is it possible to peruse the series of dispatches, without concluding that some *powerful effort*, some *combined exertion*, was contemplated by the cabinet from the very commencement of the campaign?—Was it possible for Mr. *Stuart* or Lord *Douglas* to obey the instructions conveyed to them, from October to February †, without imparting to the court of Petersburgh the hope of an important co-operation on our part *on the continent of Europe?*—a confident hope and expectation, not contingent upon the *chance* of any great event which Russia could not influence or controul?—Yet, if Lord *Moira* has correctly represented ‡ the views of his cabinet, it was only in the event of the junction of *Austria*,—a power which had made peace a year before, and which is not even mentioned in the correspondence,—that the British ministers thought of a continental operation.—If the sincerity of Lord Grey is not thus exposed to suspicion, the intentions and motives of the government, in 1806 and 1807, are at least clouded in a mystery, through which its system of policy cannot be discerned.

Whether the fate of the campaign would have been materially affected by any co-operation on our part, or whether Russia would have been now less

* There certainly was no appearance, in England, of any preparations for a continental expedition.

† It was not till the 20th of February, that the difficulties of co-operation were stated by Lord Howick. See p. 46.

‡ In the debate of 11 Feb.

our enemy, if at that period we had been more attentive to her demands *, are questions which it is impossible to solve, and upon which I cannot pretend to throw new light; but, if it be admitted, on the one hand, that the impolicy of this refusal has not been undeniably substantiated, it may be contended on the other, that neither can its wisdom be established; no result of *imprudence* could well be more mischievous than the events which followed it. Its authors may therefore defend their measure, but they cannot hold it up as a proof of the excellence of their system, or as an example to be followed by statesmen.

But it is contended that the blood and treasure, which they saved, constitute a *primâ facie* case in their favor; and, that unless it can be shewn that there was a very strong probability of an advantageous result of their exertions, their forbearance is a ground of praise;—be it so.—But then let not men and money *saved* be rated at a higher value than men and money *lost*. We cannot have one measure for Pomerania, and another for South America, Egypt or Constantinople.

For it must be remarked, that the system of "husbanding our resources," which Lord Grey describes as peculiar to his administration, consists in the abstinence from operations in the north of Eu-

* As nothing has been said by Lord Grey of subsidies, I have not adverted to that part of his correspondence with Russia which refers to pecuniary assistance. [Nos. 4. 7. 9. 13.] It might however, peahaps, be maintained, that although *six millions*, the sum demanded by Russia, was an enormons sum, yet that, if we really did not look to any great, and perhaps still more expensive, military measure, it might not have been impolitic to comply with that demand, by way of demonstrating the sincerity of our professions, and assisting our ally by a sacrifice of which the utmost extent would have been defined.

rope; and in the contraction of the means employed upon those services which were actually undertaken. The occasions of employing troops abroad, which have been taken by the present ministers, were not open to their predecessors, nor can it possibly now be determined whether or not, under similar circumstances, the conduct of both administrations would have been the same.

If, on the one hand, the conduct of the Cabinet of 1806, in regard to the northern campaign, gives reason for believing that, under no circumstances of promise, the prudent statesmen who composed it, would have largely ventured upon exertions either pecuniary or warlike; the expeditions which they undertook or contemplated must satisfy us, on the other, that even in their judgement occasions might arise, in which the fleets and armies of Great Britain might laudably be directed to distant and hazardous enterprizes. How wisely and how advantageously these occasions were selected, let us now consider.

We need not follow minutely the progress of our arms in the sea of Marmora * or in Egypt. It is sufficient to record the facts: A British squadron threatened Constantinople, with the view of compelling the Porte to return to friendly proceedings, or to surrender to us her fleet and naval equipments †; —neither purpose was effected; and our squadron

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* I include this naval service among the "military operations," because, though no land force was employed, it was directed to purposes of a high political character; and the not employing a body of troops in this service, rather than in Egypt, has been one of the alledged causes of failure.

† Lord Howick's letters to Mr. Arbuthnot, 14th and 20th Nov. 1806. [Papers on address, 15 Feb. 1808, Nos. 7 and 8.]

narrowly escaped destruction * ;—in order to support our hostile measures, and still further to deprive our enemies of the means of annoyance, a British army was landed in Egypt, whence it was speedily expelled, with no trifling loss, by a *Turkish* force †. Of these failures, as of all failures, the planners of the expeditions have been ready with palliations, But the facts, as I have represented them will not be controverted.

Neither will it be denied, that in South America in which quarter a succession of troops and commanders were employed upon services of the highest importance, political and military, the failure was equally complete ‡.

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* Sir John Duckworth's squadron passed the Dardanelles on the 19th of February 1807, and repassed on the 3d of March; for the details, see the Gazette of 5th May 1807. According to the admiral, another week would have rendered the possibility of a return doubtful.

† The orders for taking possession of Alexandria, by a detachment of about 5000 men from Sicily, in the event of the commencement of hostilities, were given to general Fox, as soon as a rupture became probable. [Lord Howick to the Admiralty, 21st Nov. 1806. Admiralty papers, No. 1. enc.] In consequence of these orders general Mackenzie Fraser took possession of Alexandria on the 21st of March 1807. [Gazette, 9th May.] After several ineffectual and disastrous attempts to obtain a firmer footing in the country, [Gazettes of 13th June and 18th July,] the British army evacuated Egypt by convention in the September following. [New Annual Register 1807, p. 299.]

‡ The original capture of Buenos Ayres on the 2d of July 1806 [Gazette 15th September,] was not a measure of Government; nor are the ministers responsible for its re-capture on the 12th of August following. [Gazette, 27th Jan. 1807.] Their measures commenced with the small force under brigadier-general Auchmuty, dispatched in October 1806; and which, in conjunction with the troops from the Cape, obtained possession in the most gallant manner of the fortress and city of Monte Video. [Gazette, 13th April 1807, and further proceedings in Gazette of 6th June and 15th August.] Brigadier-general Craufurd was in the same month of October, 1806, sent with 4,000 men to take

In no other enterprize were the British troops employed except in the unprofitable descent upon Calabria: a service undertaken without the *orders* from home *.

It is not only true then, that in no one quarter of the globe were our arms successfully employed by the statesmen of 1806;—this fact, simply stated, might be the result of a truly "husbanding policy;"—but it is undeniable that of three distinct operations, the most triumphant result was the safe return of a part of the force employed. It has not been urged by the most zealous partizan, that the enterprizes have been attended with the minutest particle of good effect; neither the equivocal merit of diversion, nor the dear-bought advantage of display, have been attributed to the expeditions to Constantinople, to Egypt or to America!

Surely if the recollection of these occurrences be insufficient to convict their authors of incapacity, it at least destroys their claims of superiority. Can

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possession of the province of *Chili*, [Mr. Secretary Windham to general Craufurd, 30th October 1806. Appendix to Whitelocke's Trial, No. 9.] on the western coast of South America, but was afterwards directed, in lieu of that operation, to join lieutenant general *Whitelocke*, under whom all the forces in that quarter were, in March 1807, united and encreased to the amount of 10 or 12,000 men, with a considerable naval force, for the purpose of regaining possession of Buenos Ayres. [Mr. Windham to general Whitelocke, 5 March 1807, No. 4.] The complete and final failure of all these expeditions, in July 1807, is fresh in every man's recollection. [Gazette, 13th Sept. 1807.]

* The island of *Capri* in the Bay of Naples had been taken on the 11th of May, by a *naval* force under Sir *Sidney Smith*. [Gazette, 29th July.] In July, Sir *John Stuart* landed in Calabria, and beat the French troops under General Regnier, at MAIDA on the 4th of that month, which led to the *temporary* evacuation of Calabria by the French. [Gazette, 5th Sept. 1806, and Supplement.] Its permanent occupation by us was out of the question.

these statesmen be suffered to look down with contempt upon those who have defeated the views of our enemy upon Denmark and her fleet—who have taken from him his last colony—who have, for the first time during the war, *stayed his progress in* Europe ?—Is it for these men to speak of " sacrifices, " *which have only purchased misfortune and calamity;*" or to say that the expeditions to the Douro, and the Tagus, " have covered our national character with " disgrace ?"

No; but they will urge that " *they* have not," in pursuit of their disasters, " exhausted the resources " of the country." It is true, they will allow, that they attempted great objects, and that their failures were in all instances complete; but they took good care that their disgrace should be inexpensive.

Was this then, in fact, the policy " so reviled ?" It may be granted that Lord Grey has many followers in his opinion of the necessity of repose—it is not difficult to find arguments for the impolicy of foreign operations. Many persons, no doubt, consider such expeditions as disproportioned to the strength of the country, as well in money as in men. Much may be said, on the other hand, for the policy of hazarding a great deal for the sake of a considerable object, and even of engaging in enterprizes, of which the chance of success is previously foreseen to be the smaller. Without sometimes adopting this policy, a small state could seldom accomplish those great exertions, by which it raises itself to the level of its powerful neighbours.

The former opinion would naturally lead us to retain no greater force, nor any other species of force, than might be necessary for our own security, or at most for those occasional services to which a large force cannot be applied; and on which there-

fore the small state is upon a par with the greater. It would lead us, certainly, to abstain from any enterprize of doubtful success and large expence.

But upon neither system should we be induced, having greater exertions in our power, to apply to a desirable object means so small as to encrease considerably the chance of failure, merely for the sake of lessening the expence of the attempt.

Yet this, if we are to credit their own representation, was the policy of the cabinet of 1806;—they exposed themselves to failure—*and they did fail*;—in every quarter of the globe, not for want of the means of success, but because they ventured not to apply them.

It may possibly be denied that this is a correct representation; it may be asserted that it was not from their unwillingness to employ great forces, but from the impossibility of their attempting it under the circumstances of each case, that the inadequacy of the force arose. To shew this, in the cases of Constantinople, Egypt, or Buenos Ayres, would, I suspect, be very difficult, but if it were so—or if it was the contemplation of greater enterprizes alone that took from the smaller their chance of success—where *then*, I ask, are we to find the "*provident system?*" Wherein consists the difference of the systems of Lord Grey and of his successors, except in the unvaried ill-success of the former? Both governments, according to this view of the subject, were ready and willing to avail themselves to the utmost of their power of every opening for exertion; but it happened, that, of the expeditions undertaken by the cabinet of 1806, not one had the good luck to succeed!

Before we come to general results, let us in like

manner consider separately the enterprizes undertaken by the administration of the Duke of Portland. Among these unquestionably there was one great failure, and it is in fact the expedition to the Scheldt alone, that enables Lord Grey to speak with confidence to the people of England, when he sets before them the disasters of the war. The plural number is but a figure of rhetoric, adapted to his intention of magnifying the importance of a single failure. Yet what is it, that has given to this memorable enterprize a stronger character of disgrace, than belongs to the numerous reverses of the last war, or to those which we have now been contemplating? Why is it, that there has been a more general and a more violent disposition to visit with indignation and severity the ministers who planned it?—Is it that the object sought, was more essential to our safety;—that greater losses were sustained, or that the glory of our arms has been tarnished by the failure? Not one of these peculiar features can be attributed to the transaction. The peculiarity consisted in the magnitude of the attempt;—in the extent of the preparations, the unexampled exertions used, the unheard-of celerity with which the armament was collected and provided. These circumstances, added to the proximity of the scene of action, and the nature of the loss sustained, attracted to the attempt a very peculiar degree of public attention, and to its failure a very peculiar degree of indignation. Those who are of opinion that having done your utmost towards success is an aggravation rather than a palliation of disaster, will retain this indignation, and will give the preference to the expeditions, or, for they are synonimous, to the failures of Lord Grey. When the historian records them all, he will perhaps find something in each to praise and to blame; but if he should happen to inherit any prejudice of party, he will not take occasion, from the enumeration of unfortunate expeditions, to inculcate

his preference for the cabinet of 1806 !—But as I do not intend to deny, that the failure of the Scheldt expedition, though not complete, was considerable and disastrous, I shall not pursue it into its details *.

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* No measure of any government has, in modern times, undergone an enquiry and a discussion so severe, as the expedition to Walcheren. The inquiry was instituted in the House of Commons, by a majority against ministers; no other proof is wanting, of the perfect freedom under which the decision was made. So impossible was it considered, that any ministry could survive a parliamentary enquiry, that that opposition became the interested and suspected side of the question. Yet, under all these circumstances, the following resolutions were passed in the House of Commons after the conclusion of the enquiry :

1. That this House taking into consideration the extreme importance of destroying the extensive and increasing naval means and arsenals of the enemy in the Scheldt, where a considerable navy had already been constructed, and was growing with great rapidity and to a formidable extent : and taking also into consideration the expediency of effecting a diversion in favour of Austria in the critical state of the war on the Continent at the period at which the expedition was undertaken ; considering also the probability of success arising from the reduced state of the force of the enemy at that period in the neighbourhood of the Scheldt, is of opinion, that His Majesty's ministers were justified in applying the naval and military means of the country in a manner which combined a great national object with a prospect of affording essential assistance to our ally ; and in advising the undertaking of the expedition, notwithstanding the difficulties with which it was known to be attended ; difficulties which appear to this House to have been increased to a degree which could not be foreseen or provided against, by a state of wind and weather altogether unusual at the season of the year, and most unfavourable to the projected operations.

2. That it does not appear to this House that the failure of this expedition is imputable to the conduct of the army or the navy, in the execution of their instructions relative to the military and naval operations in the Scheldt.

3. That this House sees, with the deepest regret, the loss of the valuable lives occasioned by the sickness of the army in the late expedition to the Scheldt ; yet taking into consideration the great and acknowledged importance of the possession of the Island of Walcheren, commanding the entrance of the principal naval station of the enemy, and considering all the circumstances con-

It is nevertheless important to observe, that the effect which the consideration of this enterprize ought to have upon the general argument of Lord Grey, is confined to the proof which its adversaries may suppose it to afford, of an erroneous judgement on the part of the ministers in undertaking it.—No failure could have less influence upon the general political system, or conduct of the war. The question which arises upon it is an insulated question. In parliament, it has been discussed and decided, under unusual circumstances of freedom, in favour of government; it may be granted on the other hand, that the "active and loud complaints" among the people, which Lord Grey describes have been excited principally by this failure. But it has effected in a very inconsiderable degree the state of the nation, will very soon be numbered among the ordinary reverses of the war,—and at any rate will never be made a ground for recalling the *uniformly* unfortunate ministers of 1806.

To the other operations of the successors of Lord Grey, a very different character belongs: the expedition against Denmark, and the war of Spain and Portugal, are to be considered with reference to their political effects, as well as to their military merits. The former being classed by Lord Grey with our measures in regard to Neutral Powers will in its political bearings be treated hereafter; but it is impossible to deny that as an operation of war, it

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nected with its retention, as they appear in the papers, and in the evidence before the House, this House is of opinion, that no blame should be imputed to His Majesty's ministers for not having, at an earlier period, advised its evacuation.

[Commons' Votes, 30th March 1810.] The details of this expedition, laid before Parliament, are too voluminous for citation. The published account will be found in the Gazettes of 7th, 12th, 19th, 20th and 22d of August, 2d of September, 19th and 30th December, 1809.

was marked with strong features of ability, both in the plan and in the execution. The object was, simply, to place the Danish fleet, and the naval stores accumulated in her arsenals out of the power of France. For this purpose a force of about 20,000 men, 22 sail of the line, and smaller vessels of every description, most rapidly and amply provided arrived off Elsineur on the 12th of August. On the 7th of September the capitulation was ratified, by which all the objects of the expedition were accomplished *. the nature of this service, and the very sufficient means adopted for its success, occasioned a less brilliant display of warlike talent and bravery than those upon which British troops have been subsequently employed, few occasions have occurred in which the true character of the system which Lord Grey is pleased to call contemptuously "a system of vigour" has been more eminently distinguished. At the period of this undertaking our disposeable force happened to be unusually large, and nothing appeared in the circumstances of Europe which warranted an expectation of any other demand for it. The object of the expedition to Copenhagen might possibly have been attained by a less powerful armament, and if other calls for our fleets and armies had existed, it might perhaps have been politic to have attempted the operation with a smaller force. But it certainly never occurred to Lord Castlereagh, when he was arranging the force destined for this important service that by depriving Lord Cathcart of a brigade or two of infantry, and some of his heavy artillery; or by making Admiral Gambier take two trips instead of one, he might possibly husband a part of our resources against his next attempt.

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* For the details, see the Gazettes of 5th and 16th of September, and 31st of October, 1807.

I introduce these observations, as illustrating what I have formerly said upon the "husbanding policy."—No measure of the Government, however, requires less of posthumous vindication, than the expedition to Copenhagen. In spite of the powerful opposition raised against it, and of the appeal attempted to the nobler feelings of a brave and just people, the act was generally popular. A more than usual majority in parliament, and a majority in the country at least corresponding to the representation, gave it their unequivocal approbation, as a wise measure, skilfully conducted, and successful!—In what operation of the ministers of 1806 can these characters be recognized?

After this operation against Denmark, no field for exertion immediately presented itself; it did not appear probable that any occasion would soon exist for the employment of a considerable British force. It was not less the duty of ministers, who had witnessed the varying events of sixteen years, to be provided with the means of taking advantage of any unexpected opening, to which our arms might politickly be directed;—considering always as such, not only any operation by which our domestic safety may be immediately preserved, but any service by which the views of our enemy may be frustrated, in any quarter of the globe. Those views consisting, according to Lord Grey *, in nothing short of "universal dominion:"——in his hopes of which, and in his "progress towards a more extended despotism, he is *checked and retarded* BY THE POWER "RESISTANCE AND RESOURCES OF THIS COUNTRY "ALONE," any operation which occasions to him even a temporary disappointment, which postpones his success in any object (thereby of course rendering its attainment more precarious) is a legitimate

* Speech, p. 11.

and politic measure of the war in which we are retained by the "injustice and ambition of our "enemy *." Under these impressions, it has been the uniform policy of the last three years, to keep as large a force as possible disposeable for foreign service, and to be provided with the means of rapid transport. This policy has perhaps been attended with some expence, and may possibly constitute one of the criminal deviations from the "Plan of Finance." I say *perhaps*, because it is not at all clear that the exertions made since 1807 would not have been more expensive under a different system.

The only call, however, for a military force which occurred, was the apparent expediency of strengthening our force in North America, with a view to the possibility of a rupture with the United States. As it has happily turned out, these reinforcements have been withdrawn for the purpose of assisting in the operations of Sir George Beckwith in the West Indies,—operations of which the success has been unvaried, and by which our enemies have been deprived of their last colony †, and of every naval

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* His Majesty's Declaration, 21 Oct. 1806.

† The only colonial success which occurred under the late administration was the capture of the Island of CURAÇOA, by a naval force under Capt. *Brisbane*, on the 1st of Jan. 1807. [Gazette, 22d Feb. 1807.] The subsequent captures have been as follow: The Danish Islands of *St. Thomas*, *St. John's*, and *St. Croix*, by a naval and military force under general *Bowyer* and Sir *Alexander Cochrane*, on the 21st and 25th of December, 1807, [Gazette, 9th Feb. 1808]; *Marie Galante*, French island, by captain *Pigot* of the navy, 2d March; *Deseada*, by Captain *Selby*, on the 30th March 1808; [Gazettes, 3d and 14th May]. The French having landed in Marie Galante from *Guadaloupe*, surrendered to lieutenant-colonel *Blackwell* on the 3d of September 1808. [Gazette, 19 Nov.] *Cayenne* surrendered on the 12th of January 1809, to the British and Portuguese naval force under captain *Yeo*. [Gazette, 15th April.] MARTINIQUE was taken by general *Beckwith* and Sir *A. Cochrane*, on the 24th of February 1809. [Gazettes, 28th of March and 13th of April.] The French troops in *St.*

station * in that quarter of the globe. The public interest has been so much excited by the events in Europe, that very little attention has been directed to the captures of Martinique or Guadaloupe. These successes have been accomplished by the force ordinarily stationed in the West Indies, assisted only by a few battalions from North America, the strongest of which have returned to Europe and are now defending *Portugal*. Are these and similar operations to be classed among "the fatal expedi-

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Domingo capitulated on the 6th of July 1809, to Sir *Hugh Carmichael*, captain *Cumby* of the navy, and the Spanish general *Ramierez*. [Gazette, 5th September.] GUADALOUPE surrendered on the 5th of February 1809, to Sir *George Beckwith* and Sir *A. Cochrane*. [Gazette, 15th March.] The Dutch islands of *St. Martin's* and *St. Eustathius*, surrendered on the 15th and 21st of February 1810, to brigadier-general Harcourt. [Supp. Gazette, 31st March.]

It may be noticed here, that the French colony of SENEGAL surrendered on the 13th of July 1809, to a naval and land force from Goree, under captain *Columbine* and major *Maxwell*. [Gazette, 26th August.]—Of the capture of the Dutch Island of AMBOYNA, by captain *Tucker* of the navy, on the 17th of March 1809, and the rest of the Moluccas within a few days after: the intelligence had not arrived at the period of Lord Grey's speech. [Gazette, 25th September.]

The Isle of BOURBON, or BONAPARTE, is the latest colonial acquisition; having surrendered on the 21st of July 1810, to a combined force under commodore *Rowley* and lieutenant-colonel *Keatinge*. [Gazettes, 13th February and 26th October 1810.]

* It is particularly to be noticed, that it is not for their value as *Sugar Islands*, that importance has been attributed by the present ministers to Martinique and Guadaloupe, but as the naval stations of our enemy. "We are commanded by His Majesty to express "the satisfaction he derived from the reduction of the Island of "Guadaloupe by His Majesty's arms, an event which, *for the* "*first time in the History of the Wars of Great Britain*, has "wrested from France *all* her possessions in that quarter of the "world; and which, together with the subsequent capture of the "only colonies in the West Indies which remained in the possession of the Dutch, has deprived His Majesty's enemies of "every port in those seas from which the interests of His Majesty or the commerce of his subjects can be molested." [Lords Commissioners' Speech to Parliament, 21 June, 1810.]

"tions" censured by Lord Grey?—or are they not rather to be added to the instances, in which the "system of vigour" is advantageously contrasted with the "husbanding policy once so reviled?"

It is somewhat remarkable, that *Sweden* is not once mentioned by Lord Grey; yet the conduct pursued in respect to that unfortunate country enters necessarily into the consideration of both systems. It might indeed perhaps be more correctly described as affording a fresh proof of the inaccuracy with which each has been delineated by Lord Grey.

To make common cause with Sweden, to urge her to the utmost exertions in support of the objects of the alliance, and to promise her the reciprocal support of this country, was the policy of Lord Grey himself *, not less than of Mr. Canning.

It has been shewn that the administration of 1806 had been fully disposed to render effectual assistance to Sweden, as well in men as in money; that this intention had been communicated to Sweden, at the same time that she was urged by the British government to be steady and active in the common cause.

It has been admitted, that the whole of the diplomatic intercourse to which I have referred, was marked with a degree of caution, to which Lord Grey would probably refer, as an instance of "prudent government." But it is undeniable on the other hand, that the backwardness of our government in bringing its troops into the field, excited in no

* See pp. 45-7.

respect a stronger sensation of disgust than in respect to the continental dominions of Sweden. That a British force should be directed to an object not immediately connected with the peculiar views of this country, had been, as we have already seen the unceasing demand of Russia; that this demand was not complied with, was the ground of her reiterated complaints. One of the first diplomatic papers which reached the hands of Mr. Canning, was a formal proposition from the Russian government, for a co-operation of British troops on the side of Stralsund, and the Oder. Of this proposition Lord *Hutchinson* was the channel; to whom "it appeared highly ad-"vantageous, and only attended with the ordinary "risques of war; as, in every event, the retreat of "the troops employed upon that service would not "be a hazardous one *."

The immediate consequence of this communication, and the first military operation of the new ministers, was the expedition of Lord Cathcart to the Baltic. It is not for a moment apprehended that Lord Grey intends to class among the reprehensible expeditions this offspring of his own diplomacy. Lord Hutchinson's letter is not only an ample justification of the measure, but is decisive of its expediency.—His observations, indeed, lead to a remark, applicable not more to the present than to many other topics of our discussion. It might almost be laid down as a general rule, that where the total amount of force appertaining to a state is decidedly inferior to that possessed by the enemy, the inferior force may, justifiably and wisely, be employed upon any service which carries with it the *probability* of any important advantage, provided that the safety of the inferior force be not *greatly committed*.

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* Lord Hutchinson to Lord Howick, Memel, 9th March, 1807. Received 18th April by Mr. Canning. Russian papers, No. 24.

Unless therefore it can be shewn that a preferable operation presented itself in another quarter, the good policy of an expedition, such as that now in question, is evinced by its safe return. In point of fact, although the troops under Lord Cathcart produced no influence upon the continental war, they were more readily directed against Copenhagen than if they had formed part of the armament sent from England. Whether, if a large force had been sent at an earlier period, any beneficial effect would have been produced, either upon the war, or upon the disposition of the emperor of Russia *, is a question which can never be solved.

The expedition which in 1808 was sent to Sweden under Sir John Moore, had not, like the other, been recommended by a powerful ally, nor was it calculated to influence materially the affairs of the continent. No documents have been made public which furnish any details of this expedition; but, we have the explicit declaration of Lord Castlereagh, " *that it* " *was undertaken on the requisition, nay, at the* " *entreaty, of the* SWEDISH *minister resident in this* " *country*, who had declared that *such a force might* " *make the whole difference of the salvation of Swe-*

* The backwardness of our Government in supporting the Continental war, was certainly among the assigned causes of the hostility of Russia, in the Emperor's declaration of the 31st of October 1807;—but there is every reason to believe that, previously to this declaration, the emperor *Alexander* had so completely given himself up to the views of *Bonaparte*, as to render a rupture with England inevitable; in a declaration of war under such circumstances every cause of dissatisfaction, real or imaginary, would of course be stated, but it would be idle to trace to this manifesto the true causes of Russia's hostility.—That she was disappointed and displeased, is beyond a doubt; the degree in which the displeasure affected her measures, is and must be a mystery.

"*den.**" Such a requisition is not conclusive as to the good policy af an enterprize; but this attempt, like the preceding, is fully justified by the little expense and risk with which it was attended. The instructions under which Sir John Moore acted are not known; it is however, generally supposed that he was† invited by the king of Sweden to undertake operations quite inconsistent with them, and with the principles upon which the British auxiliary force was required and furnished. Sir John Moore's conduct in refusing to regulate his movements by the unexpected demands of the Swedish Monarch, met with the approbation of our government, being, in fact, "conformable to his instructions ‡."

It can scarcely be doubted but that Lord Grey and his colleagues could have acted, in respect to the expedition to Pomerania in 1807, as their successors did upon the receipt of Lord Hutchinson's dispatch §.

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* Lord Castlereagh's speech in the House of Commons, 19th January 1809. Cobbett's debates, XII. p. 55.

† See Mr. Moore's account of the campaign in Spain, &c. p. 2.

‡ Ib. p. 3.

§ It may be noticed here, that our late connection with Sweden originated in the Years 1804 and 1805, with several conventions concluded under the auspices of Mr. *Pitt*, at the period of the *third coalition.* [Treaties presented to Parliament 28th January 1806; Cobbett's Debates, VI. App. No. 3, 4, 5.] On the opening of the session, on the 19th of December 1806, Lord Howick, being Secretary for foreign affairs, Parliament was informed that "*the conduct of the king of* SWEDEN *had been distinguished by the* "*most honourable firmness.*" [Cobbett, VIII. p. 16.] On the 28th of July 1807, [Cobbett, IX. p. 972.] (after the change of ministry) a message was delivered to both Houses, announcing the progress of subsidiary arrangements with the king of Sweden, —and no objection was made in either House. On the opening of the next session, 21 Jan. 1808, allusion was again made to the "firmness and fidelity of the king of Sweden." [Cobbett, X. 4.] On the 8th of February, the treaty was signed; [p. 1054] to the address in approbation, no opposition was made by the Lords;

But I admit it to be most probable that they would not have attended to M. Rehausen's requisitions in 1808, and as the compliance with it produced as good effect, they would probably argue, from that circumstance, that they would have acted wisely in their refusal. But to this inference I object, upon the general principle which I have already stated, and upon which in fact turns the whole difference between the system which Lord Grey considers as the only prudent system, and that which he sneeringly terms the system of vigour. The former leads to an excess of caution; it would scarcely permit any enterprize to be undertaken, of which the success was exposed to doubt, or in other words, it would scarcely allow of any enterprize whatever. It would admit of no expense, for which a corresponding value would not certainly be received, and in thus excluding speculation and risk, it in fact excludes every military operation which such a country as Great Britain can by possibility undertake.

Under the other system a scale of values is set

[p. 1076]; nor was there, in the House of Commons, any objection to the assistance intended to be given to Sweden, for *defensive* purposes; [p. 1160.] In closing the session, 4 July 1808, [XI. 1140] his Swedish majesty's firmness was, naturally, again acknowledged; and again on the 19th of January 1809, with peculiar reference to his "concurrence in the propriety of rejecting "any proposal for negociation, to which the government of *Spain* "was not to be admitted as a party." [XII. 3.]

After the fatal termination of the Austrian war, and previously to the next session, *Sweden* had made peace with *France*, without opposition or complaint on our part, "His Majesty having uniformly notified his decided wish, that, in determining the question of peace or war with France and other continental powers," (she had also made peace with *Russia* and *Denmark*), "she should be guided by considerations resulting from her own situation and interests." [Lords' Commissioners' Speech, 23d Jan. 1810.]—That she has since declared war against England, will not, I presume, be imputed to our ministers.

upon probabilities; it is not required that the advantages to be obtained shall be certain: the same value may sometimes be given; or, in other words, the same expense and risk may be incurred, for the smaller chance of a great object, as for the greater probability of one less considerable.

In the instance before us, the adherents of the former system would probably have retained their forces in England, until it should have been made out, almost to certainty, that by sending it to Gottenburgh they would save Sweden. They would at any rate have required from M. Rehausen a detailed plan of the campaign, and would in short, have made all the arrangements and enquiries upon our coasts, which were actually made upon those of our ally. Now, as the event happened, this would have been just as well; but, if on the other hand, Sir John Moore had found that by landing his troops he could have accomplished in any degree the object of his expedition, the delay occasioned by the more cautious proceeding dictated by the prudent policy, might have been essentially injurious to the interests of the alliance. It is frequently by promptness alone, that England must succeed in her enterprizes; and in this instance she had an additional inducement to activity, in the wish of retaining, and attaching more closely, an ally whose means were disproportioned to his zeal. The pecuniary expence therefore, (and there was none other) attending this short expedition would wisely have been incurred, even though it had altered in some degree the computation of the plan of finance.—As applied to this particular occurrence, these observations are not very important, but the instance is adopted as affording the means of illustrating and comparing the systems of the two administrations.

But of the military operations of the present government, to all of which Lord Grey applies an indiscriminate character of calamity and disgrace, by far the most important remains to be considered.

The war in Spain and Portugal, of which we are in the third campaign, will form an interesting feature in the history of the age. The causes and nature of the contest, the political part which Great Britain has acted in it, and the military exertions which it has produced, of a kind to which she has long been unused, will render the Peninsular war memorable to the latest posterity.

It forms also, the most striking peculiarity in the conduct of the successors of Lord Grey; it is not, like the expedition to the Scheldt, an insulated and transitory measure, but it is an essential occurrence in the histories of the world, of France, and of Bonaparte. Upon the transactions in Spain and Portugal depends, not only the present character of Great Britain, but the rank which she is hereafter to hold in the scale of nations.

Simply to repel the charges arising out of the Spanish campaigns, which Lord Grey has preferred against His Majesty's ministers, would by no means answer the purpose of ascertaining the state of the nation in respect to this momentous war. The very vague and general manner in which Lord Grey speaks of the misfortunes and calamities and disgraces which have befallen us in Spain,—renders a succinct account of the rise, progress, objects and success of the Peninsular war, essentially necessary to a true understanding of the question.

The circumstance most remarkable, in Lord Grey's treatment of this interesting topic, is the entire omission of *one of the kingdoms*, in defence of

which we have been contending against our ambitious and disappointed enemy. Lord Grey takes no more notice of *Portugal* than if she had been in fact, as well as in his own predictions, absorbed in Spain, and both subdued by France! This omission appears the more extraordinary, when we recollect the measures adopted or purposed by Lord Grey himself in relation to this very kingdom of Portugal; measures which in fact formed the natural introduction to those which have been since pursued, by the statesmen whose policy he describes as essentially different from his own. But let us recall the facts. When the coalition ministry was formed, Spain was at war with England, and had been connected with France, not only by the most intimate treaties of alliance, but by a policy entirely subservient to her wishes; Portugal was nominally neutral, but had been permitted to purchase her neutrality by considerable pecuniary sacrifices to France, to whom therefore, to a certain point, she was to be considered as an auxiliary.

It had long been suspected, that Bonaparte would not content himself with the sort of dependance to which, by his intrigues and by the fear of his resentment, Spain had been reduced; and still stronger apprehensions were justly entertained, that the weak kingdom of Portugal, or at least its European dominions, would fall a sacrifice to his insatiable ambition.

In the course of his abortive discussions with the French government in 1806, Lord Yarmouth was acquainted, without reserve, with Bonaparte's intention of instantly invading Portugal with thirty thousand men *. Upon this information the determina-

* Lord Yarmouth's dispatch to Mr. Fox, Paris, 30 July 1806. Received 1 August. Papers of the Negociation, No. 28.

tion of our government was taken, with a very laudable promptitude, to save Portugal if possible; but at all events to prevent her fleet, or her American possessions, from falling into the hands or under the controul of France. The measures consequently adopted are of extreme importance to every part of our discussion, although they have never (out of Parliament) been fully discussed or explained.

Three days after the receipt of Lord Yarmouth's intelligence, Lord Grey himself (then Lord Howick and first lord of the admiralty) dispatched Earl St. Vincent *, with a squadron, to the mouth of the Tagus, with orders to co-operate with the special minister and with the land force destined for the service, in carrying into effect the vigorous determination of the cabinet.

The first and most desirable object pointed out in the instructions † issued upon this occasion, was the arrangement of "sufficient and effectual measures, "by concert between the two courts, for *the complete defence of Portugal.*" Should this be found impracticable, the court of Lisbon was to be encouraged to withdraw, with all the ships and every thing else possible, to its American territories ‡.

By the ministers who prepared these instructions, the defence of Portugal, by her own exertions, and

* Order of the Lords of the Admiralty to the Earl of St. Vincent, 4 Aug. 1806. Naval papers relative to Portugal, 22 Feb. 1808, No. 1.

† Mr. Fox to the Earls of Rosslyn and St. Vincent, and Lieut. General Simcoe, 9 Aug. 1806. Papers presented in pursuance of Address of 15 Feb. 1808, No. 1

‡ The third head of Instruction is immaterial to the present discussion; but we shall presently have occasion to resort to it with a peculiar interest.

with the assistance in money, troops and ships, which His Majesty undertook to furnish, was thought to be a practicable and expedient operation. On no occasion do the official records of 1806, furnish any indication of intentions so "vigorous,"—of a determination to resist France, so positive and unqualified, as upon this of the defence of Portugal *!

True it is, that the magnificent offers of Mr. Fox and Mr. Windham were conditional upon the activity and exertion of Portugal herself; but they are not the less decisive, in proof of the great importance attributed by the cabinet of 1806, to the resistance of the views of France upon Portugal, and of their opinion of the good policy of directing to that object the forces and the treasures of Great Britain.

In point of history, it is to be observed that the danger with which Portugal was threatened appearing to be less imminent than had been apprehended, and

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* "His Majesty has thought fit to give directions that the land "force appropriated to this service should *receive successive aug-"mentations as fast as the means of transport can be provided.*" —"If Portugal should be willing seriously to engage in vigorous "and effective measures of defence, the King will approve your "expressing His Majesty's disposition to support them *to the full "extent of such means as His Majesty may be able to apply to "this object.*" Mr. Fox's letter of 9th of August.—"Under "such a system" (of vigorous and effective measures on the part of Portugal) "and *with the aid in money, troops, and ships, which "His Majesty would be entirely disposed to contribute to it,* if "really adopted and steadily pursued, there can be little doubt "that the attack of *a much larger force* than that now said to be "assembled at Bayonne *might be successfully resisted.*"—"There "is no difficulty in its being explicitly said, that, provided His "Majesty were satisfied that Portugal was taking vigorous and "effective measures for her own defence, THERE IS NO EXERTION "IN THE POWER OF THIS COUNTRY that His Majesty would not "be ready to make for that purpose, *in pecuniary assistance as "well as in military and naval succours.*" Mr. Windham to Lord Rosslyn and General Simcoe, 12 August, 1806. Same papers, No. 2.

the intelligent officer employed in the mission giving his opinion of the impossibility of defending Portugal *, the troops destined for the Tagus were countermanded in the beginning of September; and that it is not known that, during the existence of Lord Grenville's administration, any further measure of importance was adopted with respect to Portugal.

Keeping therefore in view the sentiments of Lord Grey and the cabinet of 1806, evinced by the proceedings which have just been detailed, let us now retrace the measures of their successors.

It is probable that the abandonment of the design of invading Portugal by France was occasioned by the events passing in the North of Europe, and which were not brought to a crisis till the month of July 1807; when, by the treaties of Tilsit, Prussia was stripped of her territory, and Russia was closely united to France. From that period the danger of Portugal became imminent; that she would be compelled, not only to exclude British ships from her ports, and to co-operate in the measures of Bonaparte in hostility to our commerce, but to place at the disposal of France her considerable fleet—were objects of rational expectation. The invasion of Portugal

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* On the 2d of September Lord Rosslyn stated to Mr. Fox his "despair of the possibility of defending Portugal against a French "invasion, by any means to be found there, or that Great Britain "could even with great sacrifices supply." [Papers, No. 5.] Mr. Windham's answer of the 13th of September (No. 6.) referred entirely to the cause stated in the text; and acquainted Lord Rosslyn that the troops had, for that cause, already been detained. It is however, quite immaterial, whether the abandonment of the enterprize was or was not dictated by an opinion of the impracticability of defending Portugal. The *importance* of the object, and the determination to make the greatest possible efforts for preserving it with a chance of success, are fully established by the measures adopted.

by a French force under general Junot, and the first measures of the Prince Regent *, appeared unhappily to justify this apprehension.

The policy of Great Britain in this crisis is scarcely to be distinguished from that which she had adopted in the preceding year. If, previously to the peace of Tilsit, and the consequent liberation of the French force, the defence of Portugal against France appeared an impracticable measure, much less feasible did the attempt appear when France had it in her power to direct against that weak state the whole strength which she possessed, or which she could derive from Spain. Not to hazard, under such circumstances, a British force on the continent of Portugal, was a part of the safe policy of Mr. Fox and Mr. Windham, which Mr. Canning and Lord Castlereagh thought it adviseable to imitate. But they were equally anxious to effect the emigration of the Royal Family, and prepared, at all events, to save the Portuguese navy †. Happily, both these ob-

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* The Prince had, on the 20th of October 1807, [Cobbett's Register, XII. 791.] proclaimed his intention of "acceding to "*the cause of the Continent*;" and had shut his ports against England. By another proclamation, on the 8th of November, British property was sequestered, and British subjects detained.

† Before it was certain that the Prince would take the desired resolution of withdrawing to America, measures had been taken for compelling the surrender of the Portugeuse fleet, as well as of the Russian squadron which had put into Lisbon, by the cooperation of our squadron with a force of about 7,000 men from Sicily under Sir *John Moore*, who was to be joined at Lisbon by a similar force under major-general *Spencer*. See the instructions to Sir *John Moore* and Sir *Charles Cotton*, dated 4th and 9th December 1807. [Papers respecting Russian fleet, &c. Feb. 1809, I. No. 1.] After the departure of the Portuguese fleet, measures were taken for obtaining the surrender of the Russian ships through distress,—which continued in progress when the commencement of Sir *A. Wellesley's* campaign gave a new turn to affairs. [Same papers.]

jects were accomplished, in opposition to the schemes and measures of Bonaparte *, and in the manner, not only most "congenial to His Majesty's feelings †," but most consistent with the permanent interests ‡ of the country.

So far certainly there is nothing in the proceedings of his successors to which Lord Grey can with plausibility give the character of rashness,—to which he can possibly refer, in speaking of misfortune and disgrace,—or in which he traces the fatal departure from "all those principles of prudent government which "regulated his own conduct!"

* It had been said in the *Moniteur* of the 18th of November, "*the Prince Regent loses his throne.*" For a summary of the transactions in Portugal, at this period, see Captain *Eliot's* Treatise on the Defence of Portugal, &c. ch. XI.

† Lords Commissioners' Speech to Parliament, 21 Jan. 1808. [Cobbett's Debates, vol. X. p. 3.] The emigration took place on the 29th of November 1807; [Gazette Extraordinary of the 22d of December]; and *Junot* entered Lisbon on the 1st of December. On the 26th of December, the Island of Madeira was placed under his Majesty's protection, by concert with the Court of Portugal. [Gazette Extraordinary, 21 Jan. 1808.]

‡ I cannot find, in the Parliamentary Debates, any thing said by Lord Grey on this subject:—Lord *Grenville* (21 Jan. 1808,) made some forcible remarks on the delusions which had prevailed, as to the extent of the commercial advantages resulting from the emigration. These remarks may be just or not, without at all affecting the policy (of Lord Grenville equally with his successors) of encouraging the departure of the Royal Family and *fleet* of Portugal, upon terms of intimate friendship with us, rather than permitting both to remain under the controul of France, and having recourse, ourselves, to force, for the preservation of the Brazils from the same controul. [See Cobbett's Debates, X. 22, 3.] Lord Grenville had reason when he said that France, in gaining "LISBON and OPORTO, *two of the most important ports*, FOR US "*on the whole coast of the continent of Europe*," (let this opinion be had in remembrance!) got more than we did by the change. But, is not the emigration a necessary link in the chain of measures under which we have, for more than two years, deprived France of *her* advantages, and retained our own?

It was during the period immediately succeeding the events which I have now related, that the troops of Sir John Moore were sent to Sweden. A force was about the same time assembled, under Sir Arthur Wellesley, of which the precise destination has neither been made public, nor is necessary to be known: the great and unexpected revolution in the affairs of the Spanish Peninsula, which soon succeeded, not only induced the abandonment of the enterprize then projected, but gave an entirely new face to the politics of Great Britain and France. Among the effects of this momentous change have been, a total alteration in the position which Great Britain occupied as a military power; and so material a variation of our relation towards *Spain*, and towards France as referred to Spain, as to destroy the identity of circumstances, under which alone can be compared the two systems which it is Lord Grey's object to contrast. But if, as to *Spain*, this destruction of identity is complete, it is far otherwise as to *Portugal*;—or, at least, the variation which has occurred, has been such as more firmly to establish the wisdom, and to render more exact the application to circumstances, of just those parts of the policy of Lord Grey, which his successors have imitated, and improved.

To every part of the discussion which arises out of the Peninsular campaigns, this distinction is of extreme importance; we have seen, nevertheless, that it has been entirely neglected in the speech of Lord Grey; the effect, and perhaps the probable cause of this neglect, will appear in the progress of our Narrative.

It were indeed much to be wished, that Lord Grey had been less general in his censures upon the conduct of this war. He speaks roundly of "*all those* "*national calamities and disgraces*," which have be-

fallen us, and imputes them to the criminal improvidence of the government; but, leaving us quite in the dark as to his own opinion of the nature or extent of the failures of which he complains, he makes it very difficult to appreciate their causes, or to estimate the validity of his objections. This deficiency can only be supplied by a relation of events, in the course of which I shall endeavour to meet, not only the present charges of Lord Grey and those which he preferred in a former session *, against the early conduct of the war, but other censures to which certain of his philosophical adherents have, with no unsparing hand, and no measured language, lavished upon both ministers and generals.

The first symptoms of a determined and effectual resistance on the part of the Spaniards were perceived in England early in June 1808;—England was at this time in possession of a disposeable force, equal to more considerable operations than had for a long time been undertaken.

Putting out of the question, for the moment, the feelings of enthusiastic sympathy towards the Spaniards, which prevailed at this time in England, and adverting only to the dictates of political and military science, it may be observed, that if ever there was a period in our protracted contest with France, in which a vigorous exertion seemed expedient, in which difficult and hazardous and expensive enter-

* I must, however, take the liberty of observing that the deficiency occasioned by the general language of Lord Grey in the speech before us, is not fully supplied by his speeches in the former session, as reported in the Collection of Debates. I cannot satisfy myself, for instance, whether it be his lordship's opinion, that, because we had not (as he conceives) a reasonable expectation of success in Spain, we ought not to have attempted to defend Portugal under circumstances which should make that operation more feasible than Lord Rosslyn thought it in 1806.

prizes were justifiable and politic, it was the period in which, for the first time, Bonaparte met with an opposing *people*. The complete success of this people, in their own views, was unquestionably the result of the new state of affairs, to which the wishes of the people of England were most anxiously directed; but if the enthusiasm and apparent energy of the Spaniards had presented a less reasonable expectation of ultimate success than was at that time entertained, our military policy alone would have warranted us in rendering assistance to operations which promised to give continued employment, and to oppose important difficulties to a very large proportion of the force of France.

Of the extensive Peninsula which was destined to become the scene of these unexpected operations, Spain formed a part so much the more considerable, that even, again without recurring to the splendid character of the Spanish insurrection, *that* was true, at the time of which we are speaking, which has since ceased to be true;—in a military view the interests of Portugal were merged in the interests of Spain. There could be no doubt, but that the rapid extinction of the French power in Spain, would produce the salvation of Portugal; while it must be admitted on the other hand, that the complete establishment of that power, would replace the defence of Portugal upon the footing of difficulty on which it stood, when that enterprize was abandoned in 1806.—And such being the state of the military question, I admit that neither our relations with the Prince Regent, nor our peculiar interest in the "two *most important* "*ports* of Lisbon and Oporto" dictated *at that moment*, any other measures with respect to Portugal than such as were most adviseable for the Peninsula in general.—We certainly could not more effectually serve Portugal, than by expelling the French from Spain.

This conviction has led others to the conclusion, that operations on the side of Portugal were altogether unadviseable; that we ought to have at once poured our utmost possible force into Spain, the nearer to the Pyrenees the better*; or, that if we could not do this we ought to have done nothing.

It must be confessed that Lord Grey has not adopted these opinions; he has on the other hand distinctly given his opinion against a debarkation in the Asturias or Biscay †; he has moreover as dis-

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* I refer particularly to the *Edinburgh Review*, [Oct. 1808, vol. XIII. p. 228.] for an hypothetical contrast, drawn in its most lively and pungent manner, between the policy of BONAPARTE, acting always with an undivided attention, and with his whole force, upon one point,—and of English politicians attempting, here and there, various objects, not one of which, nor all together, can influence the main contest.—I admit the general principle here inculcated, as far as it applies to states, possessing equal means, or even,—upon occasions in which peculiar circumstances render a great force on one side inapplicable, or give unusual advantages to the smaller force on the other,—to states, possessing powers greatly disproportioned to each other. But in the case now before us, I take the principle to be quite inapplicable, inasmuch as supposing, (which, by the bye, is a great deal to suppose so soon after it had been declared [by Lord *Moira*, 11 Feb. 1808] that 20,000 men was the utmost force to be spared by Britain!) that 70,000 men could and have been landed in Biscay, the result would have been nothing but an opposition of the force of *England* to that of *France*, on a field of action, studiously, as it were, selected as one on which our enemy could be most easily re-inforced and supplied.—To urge such a mode of fighting, for us, because it is *Bonaparte's*, is entirely to overlook the relative state of our population, and means of raising a military force.—But for the best answer to the learned gentleman, and for a *reductio ad absurdum*, as triumphant as it is brief, I refer to the Quarterly Review of February 1809. [Vol. I. p. 16.]

† Speech, 21 April 1809. [Cobbett's Debates, XIV. p. 130.] Whether the Edinburgh opinion was or was not adopted by Lord *Grenville*, the report of his speech does not enable me to determine. Having given [19 Jan. 1809, Cobbett, XIV. 12.] in a style of severe, but not unmerited, contempt of the contrary opi-

tinctly allowed, that an attack upon the French army in Portugal was unquestionably the most adviseable commencement of a general plan of operations ‡. But it is nevertheless to be gathered from the speeches of Lord Grey, as well as from the writings alluded to, that without a rational hope of the *ultimate and complete expulsion of the French*, these operations ought never to have commenced; and that inasmuch as neither the state of the government of Spain, nor of her resources, justified a probable expectation of this magnificent result, the whole undertaking, as far as British troops were concerned, was improvident and unwise. Our failure it is presumed, thus consisted in our inability to accomplish, in the first campaign, the great objects of the war; our calamities and disgraces are traced in the losses which were sustained by the army employed in the attempt.

In examining as well the correctness of this view of the campaign of 1808-9, as the charges against

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nion, what appear to be most convincing reasons against the plan of debarking as near as possible to the frontier of our powerful enemy, he alludes [p. 14.] to the opportunity of "sending our "troops to the port nearest the Pyrenees," as one which, "*it* "*might be said*, did actually occur"—Lord *Moira* was more decided. In 1806 or 1807 he could not spare 30,000 men, for the purpose of co-operating on the banks of the *Oder* or the *Vistula*, with the numerous and highly disciplined armies of *Russia* and *Prussia*,—because it would be risquing the safety of THE *army* of England, as he emphatically styled his *thirty thousand* men! yet, in 1808, he thought it "gross mismanagement," and the "loss "of a golden opportunity," not to find and send *fifty thousand* men, to act, in conjunction with a force of native Spaniards, who "*would have been* organized and disciplined,"—*as near* to the grand depôt of our opponent, as we could possibly moor our transports! [See Lord Moira's speech, quoted in p. 46, note *.] —On the other side, if any thing on the other side is thought necessary, see the speeches of Lord Liverpool, and Lord Castlereagh, on the same day. [Cobbett, XII. p. 24 and 59.]

‡ Speech, April 21, p. 132.

the government which Lord Grey has founded upon it—it is now necessary to revert to the facts.

The situation of affairs in June 1808 was this;—the French had a very considerable force in Portugal, being in possession not only of Lisbon and Oporto, but of the strong fortresses of that kingdom, particularly Elvas and Almeida; a squadron of the Emperor of Russia (whose intentions with respect to the new state of things had not been declared) was in the Tagus, and a French fleet was in the harbour of Cadiz, which city however was ill-affected to the French;—there was a considerable French force in the province of Andalusia, to the southward of the Sierra Morena; this was already threatened by the Spanish army. It was from the northern provinces, and particularly from Galicia and the Asturias, that the first communications and requisitions of assistance were made to England, but in almost every part of Spain, and particularly in Catalonia, the spirit of resistance displayed itself with great apparent energy. Joseph Bonaparte and the French forces were in possession of Madrid, having a free communication with France.

The first military measures adopted by the British government in this situation of affairs were to direct to the scene of expected action the largest force that could promptly be assembled and transported. General Spencer, who was already on the coast, but had an ulterior destination*; Sir Arthur Wellesley under whose command a force had been collected at Cork; and Sir John Moore who was on his return from Sweden, were without delay destined for service in the Peninsula; and it was resolved that this force

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* See p. 74.

(augmented by successive embarkations from England) or any part of it that might be first brought forward, should undertake any operation that might appear to be best suited to the combined interests of Spain and Portugal. The expulsion of the French from *Portugal* was, in the opinion, not only of this government, but of the officers employed, and of such Spanish authorities as could be without delay consulted, the most adviseable operation. This was speedily accomplished; after two brilliant successes * on the part of Sir Arthur Wellesley, and in less than two months from his departure from Cork, conventions were made by which the whole French army in Portugal, amounting to upwards of 20,000 men, consented to evacuate that kingdom and its fortresses, and the Russian ships surrendered themselves to our admiral †.

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* Sir *Arthur Wellesley* sailed from Cork on the 12th of *July*; the whole of his own corps was not landed till the 5th of August, in Mondego Bay, and that of general *Spencer*, who joined him from the South, on the 8th. On the 10th the march commenced; on the 17th the French general *Laborde* was attacked and beaten at Roleça;—on the 21st, brigadier-generals Anstruther and Acland having joined with their brigades, the whole French force, under *Junot*, was repulsed and beaten at Vimiera.—See the proceedings and report of the Board of Enquiry, and the Gazette of the 3d of September 1808.

† Military Convention, 30th August; and Naval Convention, 3d September 1808. (Gazette, 16th September.) It must be admitted, that such was the effect of the capitulation,—known by the name of the *Convention of Cintra*; an instrument, of which it has been said, that the conventions of the *Helder* and *Buenos Ayres*, by which the *British* armies were obliged to evacuate the hostile territory, were brought to mind by it, as *less shameful* terminations of a campaign! However strange and unnatural this may be, *I admit it to be true*; and I grant that "complaint" was never so "loud" and so "active" as that which raised itself simultaneously throughout Great Britain on this memorable occasion.—An examination of the justice of this universal complaint, would be far beyond an incidental notice.—I am not the advocate of the convention; but I cannot help observing, that the indignation excited by it, was not dictated by those of its stipula-

These events were known in England on the 15th of September *, and it was with little delay resolved that 20,000 men of the British army thus rendered disposeable, considerably reinforced from England, should enter Spain with the view of an active co-operation with the Spanish armies.

The policy of this determination remains to be

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tions and circumstances which were in truth the most objectionable. For the military policy of permitting the French troops to evacuate the exceedingly strong positions which they occupied in Portugal, a great deal more, I suspect, is to be said, than the public feeling would permit to be heard at the moment.—The political stipulations, and, in particular, the treatment of the Portuguese, I am much less inclined to defend. But was it *by these* that the public indignation was called forth?—I am confident that nine out of ten who were the loudest in their expression of disgust, thought only of their disappointment, in not seeing *Junot* and his army brought prisoners to Plymouth. *As it was*, the campaign was one of the most successful of our continental expeditions; but the novelty as well as brilliancy of its commencement had raised "our hopes and expectations" too high, and we were, no doubt, grievously "disappointed." This measure, by which a hope of *yesterday* was destroyed, was in public estimation not only dishonourable and disgraceful, but calamitous and destructive,—as if, instead of checking our prospect of new and unexpected blessings, it had brought upon us a sudden and frightful ruin!

That the Convention of *Cintra*, as a whole, will be regarded with approbation by an impartial historian, is not to be expected; but I am impressed with a strong conviction, that its effect upon the public mind will be acknowledged to have been (I must say) ridiculously disproportionate to the cause. For a correct picture of the English public on this occasion, see the *Edinburgh* Annual Register for 1808, p. 367-8.—It must be remembered, that Sir *A. Wellesley*, in delivering in the House of Commons a speech on the *Convention of Cintra*, which Mr. *Windham* characterized as "clear, fair, and manly," distinctly exonerated the Government from the imputation of having occasioned it. [Cobbett, XII. 633.]

* The Edinburgh Review, No. 29, says the 4th, but the Gazette Extraordinary of the 16th announces that dispatches were received the preceding day.

considered, but if we were to allow for the moment that without those prudent precautions which Lord Grey accuses ministers of disregarding, the British army ought never to have entered Spain, it would nevertheless be justly contended that the liberation of Portugal was a service of great importance, and the expedition of 1808 would have been fully justified if not a single soldier had quitted Portugal;—that country in defence of which His Majesty was in 1806 willing to make "every exertion in the power of "Great Britain," and to which defence the altered situation of Spain had given a practicability which it had not before possessed.

But by this defensive policy, we should in effect have given up the cause of Spain, whose rulers by this time began to discover that the expulsion of the French was a more difficult task than they had imagined, and were consequently very desirous of British assistance. This assistance according to Lord Grey, we ought to have with-holden, until we should have ascertained whether there was such an efficient government in Spain, and such ample resources for the supply of our army, as would be likely to "bring "*the contest to a successful termination.*" If by "successful termination" Lord Grey means the accomplishment of the great objects of the war, I deny the soundness of his principle; according to the view, already given, of the policy of this country, it was quite sufficient, that, while we rendered to the efforts of Spain herself such assistance as our means would permit, we took care that our force should not, in any operation which it might undertake, incur the risk of irreparable and disproportionate loss. As for *disgrace*, no minister ought ever to contemplate the possibility of its occurring to a British army, unless the term be applied to the ill-success of exertions beyond the power of the commander who makes them;

a species of disgrace which we may bear without unhappiness.

According, too, to the former doctrines of Lord Grey *, it was necessary that a general PLAN of the campaign should have been arranged by our government; that is, as I understand, that specific objects were to be marked out, to be pursued by specific measures,—upon the failure or success of which would depend the fate of the campaign. Here then I again venture to controvert his principle. In the then state of the war, and indeed in every state of *such* a war, it was impossible to foresee the points upon which our force might most advantageously be brought to bear; it was impossible to form a correct judgement, either of the force which would be opposed to us, or of that with which we were to act. The most accurate information as to the numbers of our enemy, and the most perfect knowledge of those of our ally, would have been entirely insufficient; inasmuch as, though we could estimate tolerably well the strength possessed by a given force of French troops, that of any number of Spaniards remained to be proved.

All, therefore, that we could do was to assemble, in the most convenient position, either for advance or retreat, the largest British force that could be maintained,—to place it under an able general; to give him from time to time the fullest information that could be collected; to communicate to him, generally, the views of the government; but to entrust him with a very large discretion, both as to his offensive movements, and to the point and period of his retreat, in case it should be rendered necessary.

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* See his speech the 21st of April, 1809, before cited.

The enquiries recommended by Lord Grey, as to the efficiency of the Spanish government, are in themselves very rational; but it is not easy to apprehend what *proofs* of efficiency Lord Grey would have required. Were we to wait until a Spanish army was produced equal to cope with that of France? Were we to say to the Juntas, "we will come when "you have shewn that you do not want us*:" or, "we are exceedingly zealous in your cause, but we "will run no risks;—you must satisfy us that we "shall be superior to our enemy, or not one league "will we march!"—"we will share in your glory, "but we decline your danger!"—In fact, we could not ascertain the efficiency of the Spanish government, without giving it every chance of success which it was in our power to afford. What would have been said, if, while we were waiting for proofs, the Spanish government had shewn just so much efficiency as to convince us, that, by a little less caution on our part, their exertions would have been successful?—But, at any rate, as a crimination of ministers, it must be shewn, that to this neglect are to be justly imputed the losses which in Lord Grey's estimation are "national calamities and disgraces."

And, in like manner, with respect to the resources of the country, the British government is not to be criminated for a disregard of the necessary precautions with respect to them, unless it be proved, that, owing to such neglect, the British army was, in movements directed by the government, exposed to failure, or to loss uncompensated by advantage. For the entry of the British army into Spain, and for the general plan of the campaign, or rather, for the arrangement of the points of debarkation and assem-

* See upon this point Lord Liverpool's speech of the 21st of April, 1809. [Cobbett's Debates, XIV. 151.]

bly of the troops, ministers are unquestionably accountable; for the result of the exercise of the discretion reposed in the officers employed under them, those officers are alone responsible.

What then were the measures adopted by government with respect to the march of the army into Spain, and its operations in that country?

Although it was not thought necessary to wait until the efficiency of the central government of Spain should have been proved by experience, yet the existence * of such a government was wisely thought essential. From the beginning of June, succours of every sort, excepting troops, had been sent into Spain, and great pains had been taken for ascertaining the state of the country and of the Spanish armies, and the mode in which a British force might most effectually co-operate with them. As early as the 2d of September, the † *North* of Spain was considered as the most adviseable field of operations, after the expected expulsion of the French from Portugal. This choice appears to have been suggested by the nature of the country and the coasts, which afforded at once an easy communication with England, and safe retreat in case of a reverse. The expediency of assembling our troops in the North appears to have been decided upon at the same time in London by our ministers ‡, who were in full communication with the Marquis of *Romana*, and recommended by

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* See Mr. Canning's speech of 19th January, 1809. [Cobbett's Debates, XII. p. 71, 2.]

† Lord Castlereagh to Sir Hew Dalrymple, 2d September, 1808. [Instructions to the commanders, &c. No. 44. B.]

‡ Lord Castlereagh to Lord William Bentinck, 30th September and 1st October, 1808. [Instructions, No. 64 and 66.]

Lord William Bentinck * at Madrid, in conjunction with the Spanish authorities, and especially General *Castanos*, of whose military judgement a high opinion had been formed by all those who had communicated with him, or observed his proceedings. In fact, no other plan was urged, either in Spain or in England, for the operations of the British force, after the determination (which was taken from the beginning) that we were not to commit them in small bodies †.

It has been said that " Sir *John Moore* was *always* " of opinion that a correct knowledge of the state " of the country, would originally have led the go- " vernment to employ the army in the *South* ‡." Of this opinion, however, no traces appear either in his dispatches, or in the portions of his journal which have been given to the public, until after his arrival at *Salamanca*. That Sir John Moore entertained

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* Lord William Bentinck to Sir Hew Dalrymple, Madrid, 2d October, 1808. " A line of march, which in the event of misfor- " tune shall allow the British army easily to unite, to receive the " reinforcements from England, and joined with the Gallician and " Asturian forces, successfully to resist the French in case they " should march upon the British force, or to attack the flank and " rear of the French in case they should follow the Spaniards " towards Madrid." [Communications from officers, &c. 3d enclosure in B. No. 2.]

† It should be observed, however, that though a concentration of our forces was the general plan of government, the officer commanding our troops in Portugal had been authorized to use his discretion in lending occasional assistance to the cause of Spain, without waiting for orders from home. [Lord Castlereagh to Sir Hew Dalrymple, 2d September, 1808, Instructions No. 44, B.] The commander of the forces in Sicily, was also authorized to act at his discretion in conjunction with the navy, on the coast of Catalonia. [Lord Castlereagh to Sir John Stuart, 11th October, 1808, referring to a former letter of 29th July, Instructions, No. 67, A.]

‡ Edinburgh Review, No. 29, p. 215.

this opinion while at Lisbon, there is no sort of proof; he certainly did not communicate it to the government *.

On the 26th of September, intelligence of the formation of a general government, as well as of the expulsion of the French from Portugal, having been received in London, the assembling of a British army in the North of Spain was finally determined upon. Twenty thousand men from Lisbon, and about ten thousand from England, under Sir *David Baird*, were destined for this service †. The command of this force was given to an officer of the highest character in the service. His instructions ‡ were short and simple—*to assemble his force in* GALICIA, *or on*

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* The first allusion to this opinion is in Sir John Moore's letter of the 24th November from Salamanca.

† Instructions, Nos. 57, 58, 60. As it is not intended to give a history of the campaign, the successive orders for encreasing this force will not be particularly noticed. It is sufficient to observe, that, early in October, it was resolved to leave no greater force in Portugal than should be necessary for garrisoning the fortresses on the frontiers and on the Tagus. [Instructions, Nos. 68, 81, &c.] Early in December an additional body of 5000 infantry (under General *Sherbrooke*) was added to the force destined for the Peninsula; [No. 87.] and measures were taken for reinforcing the cavalry.

‡ "It has been determined to assemble this force in the North "of Spain, as the quarter where they can be most speedily brought "together, and that to which the exertions of the enemy appear "at present to be principally directed."—"It will be for you to "consider on what points of Galicia or the borders of Leon, the "force can be most advantageously assembled and equipped for "service, *from whence they may move forwards as early as circumstances may permit*; and it is left to your judgement to decide whether the whole of the infantry or artillery shall be "transported from Lisbon by sea to Corunna, or whether a proportion shall be sent through Portugal to that destination." [Lord Castlereagh's first Instructions to Sir John Moore, 26th Sept. 1808. Instructions, No. 58, and Moore's Campaign, p. 237.]

the borders of LEON, *and thence to advance as circumstances might permit, to co-operate with the Spanish armies in the expulsion of the French**. His Majesty's minister in Spain was at the same time instructed to keep the commander of the forces regularly informed of any political events which could in any degree affect the safety or influence the movements of the army †.

At this period, then, the responsibility of Government is confined to the expediency of these instructions.

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* The expulsion of the French from Spain, was, of course, stated to Sir *John Moore* as the *desired object* of his co-operation with the Spaniards. It was the principle of our alliance, and to have given any other instructions to our commander, would have been treacherous. The mention of this object no more implies, on the part of those who issued it, a confident expectation of its fulfilment, than the order to take, burn, and destroy, all the enemy's ships implies the same expectation in the lords of the admiralty, of a literal obedience to their commands!—This remark would not have been necessary but for an article in the Edinburgh Review of October 1809, [vol. XV. p. 208-9.] composed apparently by the ingenious writer quoted in p. 79: it is asserted, on the authority of Mr. *James Moore*, that "such were the frantic hopes of the British Cabinet, that, in the month of September, the Spaniards alone *were expected to drive the French across the Pyrenees*; and at the end of that month, or the beginning of October, Lord *W. Bentinck* was directed to concert measures with the junta, *for an invasion of the South of France*, to be performed by the combined armies of England and Spain!" Such is the *text* of the Reviewer; he adds, *in a note*, some expressions implying a degree of doubt as to the accuracy of Mr. Moore's statement.—Was it ingenuous,—was it honest, thus to make use of a fact, exceedingly important to his argument, of the truth of which he professed to *doubt*?—and of which, in a laborious investigation of documents, he could not find a trace?—But to have admitted his doubts into his *text*, would have deprived an entertaining Romance of one of its most striking incidents!

† Mr. Canning to Mr. Frere, 6th October, 1808; [Papers presented 11th April, 1809, No. 1.] *No further instruction, or power, was given to Mr. Frere.*

Of the choice of the North as the scene of operation, enough has been said: the instruction to co-operate with the Spanish armies implies some expectation of an advantageous result; we should therefore investigate shortly the reasonableness of this expectation.—As this must in great measure depend upon the efficiency of the Spaniards themselves, it is important to relate, what, up to the end of September, had been their success.

Under the direction of *Morla* they had, without the assistance proffered by us, compelled the French fleet at Cadiz to surrender *. Under the command of *Castanos* they had attacked and beaten (at Baylen in Andalusia) a French force of 8000 men under General Dupont, and compelled them to surrender by a capitulation †, in which, another corps of 6000 men under General Wedel, (which was marching to his assistance) was glad to be included, without fighting a battle.

In Valencia, the army of General Moncey, consisting of nearly 12,000 men, had been defeated, and nearly destroyed ‡. The defence of Saragossa, by *Palafox*, is in the recollection of every freeman in Europe;—in Catalonia the exertions of the Spaniards were conspicuous §, in the defeat of General Duhesme, and the relief of Gerona.

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* On the 14th of June. [Gazettes of 9th and 12th July, 1808.]

† 20th July. [Gazette, 16th August, 1808, and Bigland's History of Spain, II. p. 470.]

‡ 28th July. [Bigland, II. p. 468.]

§ See the letters of Lord Collingwood and Lord Cochrane (the latter giving an account of the capture of Montgal) as to the proceedings in the neighbourhood of Barcelona and Gerona. [Gazette of 27th Sept. 1808.] The Edinburgh Annual Register for 1808 [p. 399] relates the defeat of General Duhesme.

The importance of these successes was sufficient to induce the French king of Spain to make a precipitate retreat from Madrid *, which was immediately possessed by the patriots.

The alacrity with which the most regular force of Spain,—under a general, considered, by Napoleon, as worthy of a command,—emancipated itself from the service of France, afforded a decisive proof of the determined attachment, of those most able to support it, to the cause which we espoused †.

In the northern provinces of the Asturias, Biscay and Galicia, (where the resistance of the people had commenced, and continued without interruption) the armies of Spain had been less successful. But *Cuesta's* defeat at Rio Seco ‡, though a reverse of considerable importance, was surely not sufficient to destroy the impression, which every other event of the summer of 1808 had reasonably made. It is not to be objected, that the early victories of the Spaniards were obtained through the *superiority of numbers*. This was surely an advantage upon which we had a right to reckon, in a resisting nation. Had the energy of the Spanish government and the talent of the generals been duly proportioned to the enthusiasm of the people, the French armies would, in every province, have met with at least a respectable opponent.

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* 31st July. [Gazette of 16th August. Bigland, II. 472.]

† Much credit is surely due, as well to the British government as to Admiral Keats, for the liberation of the Marquis of Romana and his troops, which was completed on the 13th of August. [Gazette of 24th August, 1808, and Bigland, II. p. 473; and for a very good account of all these occurrences, see the Edinburgh Annual Register, ch. 17 and 19.]

‡ 14th July. [Edinburgh Annual Register, 1808, p. 323; Bigland, II. p. 469.] Cuesta's numbers were superior as to infantry, but his defeat was, at the time, attributed to his want of cavalry.

At the period of which we are speaking, it was represented to the British government, upon the best authority which it was possible to obtain, that the armies of Spain amounted to no less than 140,000 men *. From such a force, a considerable part of it recently successful, it was surely not unreasonable to expect some efficient support. The armies in particular with which, it was probable, the British force would come in contact, were those of Blake on the left, and Castanos and Palafox on the right. The former was unbroken and well thought of by General Brodrick †, the latter victorious, and its acknowledged deficiences did not prevent one of our most distinguished officers ‡ from speaking with confidence, a short time afterwards, of the event of a battle.

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* Viz.

Blake	30,000
Romana	10,000
Andalusia	25,000
Estramadura	12,000
Castille	12,000
Valencia	16,000
Arragon	16,000
Catalonia	20,000
	141,000

Lord William Bentinck to Lord Castlereagh, Madrid, 2d October. [Communications B. No. 2. sixth Enclosure.] It is to be observed, that those who have objected to the proceedings and reports of the officers employed upon special missions in Spain, have uniformly excepted Lord William Bentinck.

† Letter to Lord Castlereagh, Reynosa, 10th Sept. [Communications C. No. 1.]

‡ Lord William Bentinck to Lord Castlereagh, Madrid, 14th November. "This army is also in want of clouthing, of money, "and of provisions; *its spirit, however, is represented to be ex-"cellent; and Colonel* GRAHAM, *in whose opinion I have great "reliance, speaks very confidently of the event of a battle.*" [Communications B. No. 5.]—The Spanish troops had a much better reputation, previously to the present contest. The French general Latrille dedicates five chapters of his Reflexions on Modern War, to *Augereau's* Campaign of 1794 in Spain, and declares

But without looking to any distinct operation in conjunction with the Spanish armies, great importance was attributed, by those of the most competent judgements, to the presence of a British force in Spain. Not only Mr. Stuart, Sir Hew Dalrymple * and Lord William Bentinck †, concurred in this sentiment, but Sir John Moore himself was "*aware* "*of the importance of even the name of a British* "*army in Spain* ‡."

These events and opinions are adduced to justify, —not an offensive movement against the French, *that* is a consideration entirely separate,—but the determination of our cabinet to assemble the British force in a part of Spain, from whence co-operation in advance might be practicable, or a retreat secure. Upon the expediency, as well as the nature of offensive operations, the General was to decide. He found, at a very early period, "a state of things quite different "from that conceived by the British government §," —the army of Blake had been separately defeated ‖,

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that "he is not acquainted with men more patient, more sober, "better disciplined, or more *steady in action*, than the Spanish "soldiery, &c. &c." [ch. 32.]—The intelligent and candid author of the "Military Character of the European Armies," speaks in terms of admiration of the Spanish troops, which "*have been able* "*to withstand the French*, in spite of the ignorance and negli- "gence of their officers, and all the defects of their military sys- "tem." [P. 73.]

* Sir Hew Dalrymple to Lord Castlereagh, Benefico, 27th September. [Communications A. 2.]

† Lord William Bentinck to Lord Castlereagh, Madrid, 26th September. [Communications B. 1.]

‡ Sir John Moore to Lord Castlereagh, Lisbon, 18th October. [Communications F. No. 2; Moore's Campaign, p. 246.]

§ Sir John Moore to Mr. Frere, Salamanca, 27 November. [Correspondence relating to Spain, No. 1, Moore, p. 63.]

‖ In a series of actions with the Dukes of Belluno, Dantzic,

that of Castanos, upon which greater reliance had been placed, sustained itself not much longer *. Upon the information of this last reverse, Sir John Moore determined upon a retreat into Portugal †, and ordered Sir David Baird to retire upon Corunna ‡. This resolution continued till the evening of the 5th of December, when it was decided to advance upon Valladolid with his united force—"*to be in Fortune's* "*way* §;" a determination varied on the 14th into

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and Dalmatia, at Soronosa, Valmaseda, Espinosa, and Reynosa, from the 31st of October to the 12th or 13th of November. [Communications C. 9, and Papers 14th March, No. 9, 10, 11; Edin. Annual Register, 338; Bigland, II. 479; first to the fifth French Bulletins, in Cobbett's Political Register, XIV. pp. 928, 950.] The army of Estremadura under Belvedere had also been defeated at Burgos by the Dukes of Istria and Dalmatia on the 11th of November. [Bigland, II. 478; 2d French Bulletin, Cobbett, 950; Moore, p. 45; Edin. Ann. Reg. 423.]

* Being defeated at Tudela on the 22d of November by the French forces collected under the Duke of Montebello. [Sir John Moore to Lord Castlereagh, 29th November, Communication F. No. 5; Moore, p. 268; 11th French Bulletin, Cobbett, 978; Edin. Ann. Reg. 424.]

† Sir John Moore arrived on the 13th of Nov. at Salamanca, and was soon followed by the several divisions of infantry which came from Lisbon by way of Almeida. On the 24th he wrote to Lord Castlereagh, informing him that he thought ill of affairs, and could not then undertake any thing beyond the assembling of the army. On the 29th, having heard of the defeat of Castanos, he communicated his intention of retreating. On the 5th of December, in the morning, he wrote more particularly on the same subject; but, writing again in the *evening*, he stated that "considerable hopes were entertained, from the enthusiastic manner "in which the people of Madrid resist the French;—that *he* had "not much hope;—but in consequence of the general opinion, "which was also Mr. Frere's, had ordered Sir D. Baird to suspend his retreat, and intended to continue at Salamanca, to be "guided by circumstances. [Communications F. 4, 5, 6, 7; Moore, pp. 257, 268, 270, 273.]

‡ Sir John Moore to Sir David Baird, 28 November. [Moore, p. 69.]

§ See Sir John Moore's letter of the 5th above cited, and those of the 8th and 10th December. [Communications F. 8, 9, 10; Moore, 289, 291, 293.]

the offensive movement against Soult *, on the Carrion, which has been so much discussed, and which ended in the retreat from Sahagun to Corunna.

It surely will not be denied, that the answers returned by the Secretary of State to the several communications of Sir John Moore, left him, upon every point, to the free exercise of his own judgement. Not one expression is to be found in Lord Castlereagh's dispatches † by which the responsibility of the movements of the General can be fixed upon the Cabinet. Neither previously to his arrival at Salamanca, nor in answer to his communications from that city, did Sir John Moore receive a line of more precise instruction, as to the nature of his operations, than those which have been given.

It is not, indeed, pretended that the movement in advance, which Sir John Moore adopted, was directed by the Cabinet; the imputation is more circuitously turned. The march from Salamanca is said to have resulted from the advice of the *Ambassador*, whose communications the General had been directed *to receive with the utmost deference.* In this manner, the Cabinet is made responsible ‡, directly for the opinion of Mr. Frere, and indirectly for the proceedings of Sir John Moore;—in neither case with correctness.

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* Sir John Moore's letter to Sir D. Baird, from Alaejos, 14th, and to Lord Castlereagh, from Toro, 16th of December. [Moore, 126 and 297; Communications F. 11.]

† Sir John Moore's dispatch of the 24th November was acknowledged by Lord Castlereagh's of the 10th of December [Instructions, 91] received at Benavente on the 27th. That of the 29th was acknowleuged by Lord Castlereagh's of the 10th of December [Instructions, 95.] And those of the 5th of December by a subsequent dispatch of the same day. It is not stated when these of the 16th were received by Sir J. Moore;—possibly not at all.

‡ Lord Grey's speech, 18th April 1809. [Cobbett, XIV. 70.]

That Sir John Moore's resolution of the 5th of December, for suspending his retreat, and the determination to advance upon Valladolid, which speedily followed, were very far from proceeding "entirely "from the instigation of Mr. Frere *;" we have the distinct assurance of his own Adjutant General, writing expressly in vindication of his memory. That the communications of the Ambassador, were among the motives which induced the General to alter his determination, is readily allowed; but it is equally inconsistent with truth, that they were the sole inducements, as that Sir John Moore felt himself under the necessity of receiving them as commands.

Those are indeed most injudicious friends of Ge-

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* Brig. General Clinton's few remarks, p. 8-10. "From the "correspondence between Sir John Moore and Mr. Frere, it "has certainly, with seeming probability, been assumed that Sir "John Moore yielded his own judgement to the opinion of the "British Minister's, and that he was induced to form the junction "with Sir David Baird, and to make the move towards Valla-"dolid, *entirely at the instigation of Mr. Frere.* But those who "entertain this opinion do not recollect what were the circum-"stances which determined Sir John Moore to retreat upon "Portugal, and how completely the situation of the enemy's "force had been changed since that determination had been "formed. The whole of the enemy's force, which after the "defeat of the Spaniards at Burgos and Reynosa might have been "employed against the separated British corps, had been carried "into Catalonia, or against Madrid; by this move on the part of "the enemy, Sir John Moore found himself at liberty to make the "junction with Sir David Baird, and the column under Sir John "Hope which had entered Spain by Badajos had by this time "arrived within a day's march of Salamanca: accounts were "received from various other channels as well as from Mr. Frere, "that the Spaniards were resolutely defending themselves in "Madrid, and, although none of that enthusiasm, of which so "much had been said, was apparent in any part of Spain through "which Sir John Moore had passed, it was represented to him "by British officers upon whose judgement he knew he could "rely, that the spirit which had manifested itself at Saragossa, "and in other parts of Spain, was by no means extinct."

neral Moore, who consider him as having yielded his opinion, upon a military question, to any civil authority whatever. But even were it allowed that he acted in this instance, in contradiction to his known and just principles, the responsibility would still not be fixed upon the ministers, unless this obedience to Mr. Frere's requisitions had been distinctly imposed upon Sir John Moore by their authority. By General Clinton, who was acquainted with his Commander's proceedings from hour to hour, no such orders from home are even alluded to by insinuation, as the cause of Sir John Moore's advance; the motive of which step, he has otherwise satisfactorily explained. The brother of the General has indeed laid some stress upon the instructions * which he had received; but, that Sir John Moore himself laid very little, may be inferred, nay proved, from the various communications from himself which are before the public. On the subject of his determination to advance, Sir John Moore wrote letters to Lord *Castlereagh*, both public and † private ‡;—to Sir *David Baird* § and to Mr.

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* Moore, p. 89.

† Sir John Moore to Lord Castlereagh, Salamanca, 5th December. "I have in consequence of the general opinion, which "is *also* Mr. Frere's, ordered Sir David Baird to suspend his "retreat, and I shall continue at this place, until I see further, "and shall be guided by circumstances." In the letters of the 8th and 10th December the Ambassador is not mentioned. [Communications, No. 7, 8 and 9.—Moore, p. 273, 289, 291.]

‡ Private letter to Lord Castlereagh, Salamanca, 12th December. "I fear Mr. Frere is infinitely more sanguine upon the "subject of Spain than I am; this is to be regretted, as it renders "it more embarrassing for *you* to come to a decision upon the "measures to be pursued." [Moore, p. 294.]

§ From Salamanca, 5th, 6th, 8th and 12th December; from Alaejos, 14th December. "This, the resistance of Madrid, "arrests the French, and people who are sanguine entertain "great hopes from it. I own, myself, I fear this spirit has

Frere *, and made an entry in the Journal which he kept for his own use. In not one of his dispatches

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"arisen too late, and the French are now too strong to be resisted in this manner. There is, however, no saying, and *I feel myself the more obliged to give it a trial, that Mr Frere has made a formal representation which I received this morning.*" He therefore orders him to suspend his retreat, and the next morning directs him to return to Astorga. The expression here cited, from the letter of the 5th, is by far the strongest allusion to Mr. Frere's requisition, to be found in the whole correspondence. [Moore, p. 91, 92, 111, 116, 125.]

* Sir John Moore wrote to Mr. Frere from Almeida on the 10th of November; from Salamanca on the 16th, 19th and 27th. [Moore, pp. 29. 33. 38 and 63.] In the last, [Correspondence, 11th April, 1809, No. 1.] he describes "the state of things as quite different from that which had been conceived;" and refers to Mr. Frere's "Communications with the Spanish government," and says, "You are, *perhaps*, better acquainted with the views of the British Cabinet; and the question is, what would that Cabinet direct if they were upon the spot to determine? It is comparatively of very little consequence in whom shall rest the greatest responsibility; I am willing to take the whole or a part; but I am very anxious to have *your opinion.*" Surely nothing like a necessity to abide by Mr. Frere's decision is implied here; nor, in fact, did Sir John Moore wait for it.—On the 2d, 5th and 6th of December, he received very urgent communications from Mr. Frere (dated Aranjues, 30th November, and Talavera, 3d December; Moore, 79, 80. 88 and 95.); to all of which he replied in language equally inconsistent with any such idea of necessary deference, and indeed most strongly marking the necessary independence of his military judgement. In his letter from Salamanca of the 6th December [Correspondence, No. 5, and Moore, p. 97.] he refers to the intention which he had, previously to Castanos's defeat, of "marching on Madrid to share the fortunes of the Spanish nation;" and says, that he wished to have *that* opinion confirmed by Mr. Frere's, which was the reason of his writing to him on the 27th of November; but he adds, "had you been *adverse* to the army being committed in the heart of Spain, your opinion upon such a subject would, I may say, certainly have decided me to have altered my intention, with respect to the determination I made on the evening of the 28th, after receiving from Mr. Stuart the account of Castanos' defeat. I should, had you been with me, have communicated it to you; *but should never have thought of*

does the General refer to Mr. Frere's communications as imperative; nor does he in his private Journal refer to them at all *. Can it be believed that so ready and correct a writer as Sir John Moore, would in five or six distinct statements of the same operation of his mind, have omitted to mention its predominant motive, and, that upon which, if it should prove erroneous, his justification would principally rest?—The idea is so preposterous, that I should not have mentioned it, if, upon any other supposition, the disasters of the retreat which Lord Grey thinks so fatal and disgraceful, could be justly imputed to the British government.

If it has already been shewn that Sir John Moore did not consider himself as having received instructions to guide himself by Mr. Frere's opinions, it is hardly necessary to shew that the government at home never thought of giving such instructions. It should however be observed, that in the answers returned to the various communications from Salamanca, Mr. Frere is, in no instance, referred to by Lord Castlereagh, who invariably acquiesces in the determinations of the General, necessarily altered, as they were, according to the frequent change of circumstances.

The only instruction which has been specifically noticed, in proof of the authority vested in the Ambassador, is contained in Lord Castlereagh's letter of the 14th of November †. This was not received by

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"*asking your advice or opinion*, as that determination was founded "upon circumstances with which you could not be acquainted; "*and was, besides, a question merely military, of which I thought* "*myself the best judge.*"

* Moore, p. 101.

† [Instructions, No. 50; Moore, 254.] See Edinburgh Review, No. 29, p. 220; and Moore's Campaign, p. 89. It is clear

Sir John Moore until the 4th of December. He had previously written several letters on the subject of his intended retreat, both to Lord Castlereagh and Mr. Frere;—He wrote to both on the 5th and 6th. Can any thing be more absolutely incredible, than that he considered this instruction as placing him in a situation of new difficulty, unbecoming his character and command, and yet, not only did not remonstrate against the innovation, but never took the slightest notice of it, in communicating, either with the persons from whom he received it,—with those to whom it gave him a new relation,—with those to whom he habitually confided his thoughts, or even (for such is the nature of his journal) with his own mind *!

The fact appears to have been, that Sir John Moore was very strongly impressed with the necessity of undertaking *something*, after the army had

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that Mr. Moore did not notice the date of the receipt of this dispatch, which is nevertheless acknowledged by Sir John Moore on the 5th of December, as received the preceding day.

* The facts are even stronger;—Sir John Moore receives this dispatch of the 14th of November, on the 4th of December. In the *morning* of the 5th he writes to Lord Castlereagh, announcing his intention of retreating, but taking no notice of his lordship's dispatch. In the *evening* of the same day, he writes again, he tells the minister that he now means to advance, and gives his reasons, only mentioning Mr. *Frere* as concurring in the general opinion. [See p. 98.] The concluding and least important paragraph in this letter, is the *simple acknowledgement* of the dispatch of 14th November, which is supposed to have put him under the direction of Mr. *Frere*, and thus mainly to have influenced his determination to advance.—But further,—on the 8th,—having more maturely weighed the purport of Lord Castlereagh's dispatch, he writes a manly, sensible and just *remonstrance*;—not, however, against the powers with which it is supposed to have clothed the *Ambassador*, but againt the superior rank which, in the case of co-operation, which did not occur, he was to give to the Spanish Generals. [Moore, 289.]

been collected in Spain *, and, that he thought it adviseable, with this view, to incur any hazard, short of the loss of his army;—that it appeared to be "the "general opinion" on the 5th of December, that an opening for useful operations was offered by the state of the popular feeling, and the actual resistance which it produced; that this opinion was very strongly entertained by Mr. Frere, and that the General was on that account the more induced to pay attention to it †.

With these motives, then, and without any orders from home, Sir John Moore took measures from the 5th to the 14th of December, for collecting his whole force at Valladolid, for the general purpose of effecting a diversion in favour of the South of Spain ‡. The first symptoms of advance having drawn upon the British army the corps of Marshal Soult, General Moore on the 14th changed the direction of his march, with the view of attacking this French corps §: but having learnt, previously to his intended advance upon the Carrion, (which was to have taken place on the 24th of December), that the several divisions of

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* "We have no business here as things are; but being here, "it would never do to abandon the Spaniards without a struggle." [Extract from the Journal, Moore, p. 50.]

† Letter to Sir David Baird, cited in p. 99; and Extract from Journal. [Moore, p. 91 and 50.]

‡ "I think it an object with the troops I have to march to "Valladolid; from whence, according to the information I may "receive, I may move on to Palencia and Burgos, and thus threa-"ten the enemy's communications, and cause a diversion in fa-"vour of Madrid or Saragossa, or any movement which may be "in contemplation to the south of the Tagus." Sir John Moore to Sir David Baird, Salamanca, 12th December 1808; [Moore, p. 116; see also his letter to Mr. Frere of the same date [p. 118.]

§ Letter to Sir David Baird, Alaejos, 14 December; to Mr. Frere, Toro, 15 December; [Moore, 125 and 127]; and to Lord Castlereagh, 16 December, cited in p. 96.

the French army, which were marching towards Badajos and the Guadiana, had been recalled by Bonaparte, who was himself about to collect his whole force at Benavente, the British General * perceived that he was no longer equal to the force which was opposed to him; and accordingly commenced his retreat into Galicia †, and, subsequently, to Corunna.

As a diversion however, the movement was complete ‡. The march of the French to Badajos was stopped, nor was it until the spring of the year 1810 that they penetrated into the south western provinces, which appeared to be their object at the time of which we are speaking.

In order to accomplish the purpose of this diversion, Sir John Moore necessarily "risked the loss "of his army §." It was nevertheless preserved; after a victorious repulse of the enemy, in which its brave Commander gloriously terminated his career ‖! The losses, however, in men, stores and money, which in its rapid retreat before a very superior force it naturally sustained, far out balanced, in the esti-

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* Moore, 159 to 168. Letter to Lord Castlereagh, Benavente, 28 December; Communications, F. 12, and Moore, 300.

† I purposely avoid all discussion on the subject of the resolution which was once entertained by Sir John Moore, of halting at Astorga, or Villa Franca, or defending Galicia.

‡ Sir John Moore's letter to Lord Castlereagh, 28th December, and Lord Castlereagh's speech, on moving for the monument, 25 Jan. 1809. [Cobbett, XII. p. 141.]

§ Letter of 31st Dec. from Astorga. [Communications F. 13, and Moore, 303.]

‖ Report from Sir *D. Baird* and Lieutenant-general *Hope*, of the battle of Corunna, 16 Jan. 1809. [Gazette, 23d Jan.]

mation of Lord Grey, the object proposed by the forward movement *.

The correctness of that estimate I shall not examine, nor shall I discuss the conduct of the retreat; observing only, that if we ever expect to succeed in war, we must submit to its chances;—we should either make peace at once, or be prepared to hear occasionally of disasters; of sick abandoned, stores destroyed, dollars thrown away, horses and men dead of fatigue—of all the melancholy occurrences, in short, of this memorable retreat, which have been sufficiently painted by others,

quæque *ipse* miserima *vidi!*

A due appreciation of the miseries of war, and a benevolent sympathy for the sufferings which it produces, may perhaps justifiably give a pacific tendency to our politics; but if we are confident that we are contending in a just cause, and that it is not in our power to terminate the contest, we must not permit our feelings, however praiseworthy in themselves, to interfere either with the direction of our campaigns, or with our estimation of the military proceedings of our Generals. If we are disposed to appreciate very highly the disasters consequent upon the march from Salamanca, we ought to recollect that a little too much boldness in advance, is the most pardonable fault which can belong to a Commander.

But enough of this first campaign of the Peninsular war;—its general results were, complete success in the very important object of *Portugal*, from which kingdom, containing *two of the most important* PORTS,

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* In his speech of 18th of April 1809, Lord Grey distinctly gave his opinion against the expediency of the advance from Salamanca. [Cobbett, XIV. 144.] The Edinburgh Reviewers seem disposed to concur in this opinion. [No. 29. p. 215.]

for us, on the whole coast of the continent of Europe, we expelled the French ; ~~and in which~~ we obtained, through our military and political exertions, an influence which has daily become more decided and more important. It will hardly be denied, *now*, that with respect to the other kingdom of the Peninsula, our exertions were extremely beneficial ; we certainly did not expell the French from *Spain*, nor did we recover her capital from their hands, but we without a doubt, added most importantly to the resistance which Bonaparte experienced, and which, to this moment, he has not overcome.

If, therefore, I were to acquiesce in the responsibility of the ministers for the Convention of Cintra, and for the advance to Sahagun and consequent retreat, and thus to throw into the balance against them, all the *disgraces* and *disasters* imputed to these proceedings, I should nevertheless ask with confidence, whether in any *prior* campaign, since the seven years' war, (excepting, perhaps, that of 1801), so much had been effected by a British army ?

But the general importance of the assistance given to Spain, as well as the distinct importance of Portugal, will be more strikingly apparent in the succeeding occurrences ; for we must not regard the operations of 1808, either in Portugal or in Spain, as single operations of war, of which the success or failure could be defined or estimated, as soon as the campaign was over. They constitute the introduction to the measures of 1809 and 1810,—the commencement of a new war-like system, or at least of a war conducted under new circumstances, of which the several events cannot be appreciated, until time shall have developed the great result.—But let us proceed with Lord Grey.

His Majesty's ministers are warmly censured for risquing, "after the experience of the unfortunate "campaign of Sir John Moore, another army, in the "same country, *in the prosecution of similar ope-"rations* *."—The only results of this proceeding, were likewise, according to his lordship, "misfor-"tune, calamity and disgrace."! This representation of the campaign of 1809, is equally inaccurate as to its objects and its success.

Although the ultimate view of our measures was assuredly the same, the operations to which the British army was directed, were *not* similar to those of the preceding year.

Of the campaign of 1808, *Spain* was the principal object, to which, *Portugal* was subordinate: the experience of that campaign, though it did not, as Lord Grey seems to think, demonstrate the absurdity of all operations in the Peninsula, placed in a strong point of view the inefficiency of the Spanish armies; it satisfied us that a British army could not with prudence, or with any rational hope of expelling the French, be committed in protracted measures of offence, in the heart of Spain, because it could neither rely upon the country for subsistence, nor upon the Spanish forces for support.

But Spain was still unsubdued; nothing had occurred to destroy the expectation, that, on particular points, more distant from the Frontier of France, and better calculated for permanent occupation, the arms of England might be eminently useful in protracting her resistance. As for Portugal, the less probable it appeared, that the French would be expelled from Spain, the more important it became to

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* P. 21.

carry into effect the unvaried policy of Great Britain, evinced by the ministers of 1762 *, of 1797 †, and of 1806, as well as of 1808, by attempting the defence of that country. If the Spaniards had been completely victorious, the defence of Portugal would have been useless;—had the French been completely victorious, it might have been impracticable; but the actual state of things was essentially different from *either* of these alternatives; nor was it verging towards either.

Those who despaired of the expulsion of the French, scarcely expected that their success would be so *rapid* and *complete*, as to enable them either to turn against Portugal the resources of Spain, or to neglect Spain, in invading Portugal ‡. At the

* For some notice of the campaign of 1762, see the accounts of Portugal, by *Dumouriez* and the Duke of *Chatelet*, and the Annual Register for 1762. Of the difficulties with which an enemy ought to expect in invading Portugal, a pretty high idea will thence be formed. See also Captain *Eliot's* Treatise, cited in p. 75.

† A British force was sent into Portugal soon after the rupture with Spain in 1796, and continued there nearly to the end of the last war. None of the annual publications or Histories of the time take any notice of this force. It was commanded by the late *Sir Charles Stuart*, who had, I have some reason to believe, a very strong opinion of the defensibility of Portugal.

‡ Or, if they did expect this, they must now acknowledge an error.—"The French could not have held Portugal, if Bonaparte could not conquer Spain, and must get possession of it if he does." [Lord *Grenville's* speech, 19 Jan. 1809; Cobbett, XII. 14.] This is, owing to two circumstances, a very popular expression; in the first place, it has the unspeakable advantage of *point*; and, in the second, it is favourable to the doctrine of the Edinburgh Reviewers, who measure the wisdom of all military operations by the standard of Bonaparte. In this instance, they have particularly alluded to his disregard of *Naples* in the great campaign of 1805; which conduct, we ought, they infer, to have imitated, by leaving Portugal to follow the fate of Spain. This would be very well, if the fate of Spain was likely to be decided in one campaign, or if there were none but purely military reasons for keeping the French out of Portugal.

same time, then, that there remained certainly every motive for defending Portugal which had existed at any of the periods in which it had been contemplated, and the additional inducement of assisting the cause of Spain; the defence itself was a measure now to be viewed with a very different expectation of success, than at the periods in which Spain was to have been neuter, or perhaps assisting in the invasion!

Although, therefore, "His Majesty's determination remained unchanged, not to withdraw the aid "of his forces from the cause of Spain, while there "was any hope of its being usefully employed to resist the designs of the enemy*;" and England accordingly offered to employ a force in the South of Spain, provided that, by admitting a British force into *Cadiz* †, the Spanish government would give us,

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* Lord Castlereagh to Sir John Moore, 11 Jan. 1809. [Instructions, No. 104.]

† Early in December 1808, Mr. Frere had been instructed to make this proposal to the Spanish Government. The discussion, which continued till February 1809, displays much unreasonable and untimely jealousy on the part of the Junta, which, it is however to be hoped, is now removed. [Papers presented 1810. C.] In April Mr. Frere was again instructed to offer the army from Portugal, in the event of the evacuation of that country, upon the condition of the acceptance of a British garrison in Cadiz. [Papers F.] Some embarrassment was occasioned by the circumstance of Sir *George Smith*, who was sent to Cadiz in December, for the purpose of making military reports, having sent to Lisbon for troops to garrison Cadiz, which accordingly arrived under Major-general *Mackenzie*, but were refused admittance. I am confident that the open and temperate conduct, on this occasion, of the British Cabinet, and of Mr. *Canning* in particular as its organ, and of Mr. *Frere*, was calculated to produce, and did produce, a very advantageous effect upon the Spaniards. [See, particularly, Mr. Canning's letters to Mr. Frere, of 14th Jan. and 26 Feb. and 19 April. Papers 1810, C. No. 3. 4. and 9. and F. No. 2.] I must here observe, in reference to a remark of the Edinburgh Reviewers, [No. 29. p. 225.] upon Lord *Castlereagh's incredible instruction* of the 11th of Jan. to Sir *John Moore*, to follow "the "wishes and determination" of the Spanish Government, that it

as well a proof of confidence as the means of security for our army, yet without this condition, the Cabinet positively refused to commit a British army in the pursuit of operations similar to those of 1808;—and thus, upon the retreat of Sir John Moore from Leon, and the refusal of the condition offered to Spain, the defence of Portugal became the first and immediate object of attention. But, as well with a view to this great object, as in the hope of still rendering incidental assistance to Spain, Sir Arthur Wellesley, to whom the command of the forces was again entrusted, was invested with a discretionary power of extending his operations into Spain *; be-

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refers simply to the question of transporting the army from Galicia to *Lisbon* or *Cadiz*.

* "The defence of Portugal you will consider as the first and "immediate object of your attention. But as the security of "Portugal can only be effectually provided for in connection with "the defence of the Peninsula in the larger sense, His Majesty, "on this account, as well as from the unabated interest he takes "in the cause of Spain, leaves it to your judgement to decide, "when your army shall be advanced on the frontiers of Portugal, "how your efforts can best be combined with the Spanish, as "well as with the Portuguese troops, in support of the common "cause. In any movements you may undertake, you will, how-"ever, keep it in mind, that, until you receive further orders, "your operations must necessarily be conducted with a special "reference to the protection of that country." Lord Castlereagh to Sir Arthur Wellesley, 2d April, 1809. [Papers presented in 1810, I. No. 1.] In a dispatch of the next day [same papers, No. 2.] the Secretary of State, referring to the refusal of the Spanish government to admit British troops into Cadiz, acquaints the General that "His Majesty does not feel that he can, in justice "to the safety of his own troops, again employ an auxiliary army "in Spain, till the Spanish government and nation shall cease to "entertain those feelings of jealousy, which are equally incon-"sistent with their own interests and the effectual prosecution of "the war. You will therefore understand, that it is not His "Majesty's intention, in authorizing you to co-operate with the "Spanish armies in the defence of Portugal and of the adjacent "Spanish provinces, that you should enter on a campaign in "Spain, without the express authority of your Government; and "in any concert you may form with the armies in Spain, you

ing at the same time strictly enjoined not to enter upon general operations in that country.

Lord Grey's censure of the conduct of our ministers in regard to the campaign of 1809, is equally *general* with that applied to the former campaign, nor can the deficiency be supplied from any former speech †.

Does Lord Grey censure the attempt (which has hitherto been successful) to defend Portugal?—or does he object to the instructions, by which the Commander of our forces was empowered to accomplish the purpose of his command by whatever means might appear most advantageous?

I have not been able entirely to satisfy myself as to Lord Grey's opinion upon the defence of Portugal; but I justify the Cabinet from the charge of rashness or folly, even if these instructions were founded upon some degree of hope, of a favourable influence upon the cause of *Spain*. The inertness

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"will cause it to be understood, that it is to be confined to the "specific object in view; and that *the services of your army* (un-"der the orders you have received) *cannot be employed in general* "*operations in Spain, as the force under Sir John Moore was in*-"*tended to have been, without a previous arrangement to that ef*-"*fect being settled between the two Governments.*" Referring, on the 25th of May, to this dispatch, Lord Castlereagh writes to Sir Arthur Wellesley: "in order that you may be enabled the "better to co-operate with the Spanish armies against the com-"mon enemy, I am to authorize you to extend your operations "in Spain beyond the provinces immediately adjacent the Portu-"guese frontier, provided you shall be of opinion that your doing "so is material to the success of your operations, and not incon-"sistent with the safety of Portugal."

† There is, however, in both cases, the same confusion of the distinct responsibilities of the ministers and the generals. I do not lay stress upon this, because, in the present instance, it is the line of opposition to *identify* the two parties, whereas, in the former, they were *contrasted*.

of the Spanish government, and the inefficiency of the Spanish armies, experienced in 1808, were quite sufficient to authorize our refusal to commit ourselves deeply in their operations; but, it must at the same time be allowed that the continually renewed opposition which the French had experienced in every part of Spain *, since the termination of Sir John Moore's campaign, made it at least possible that we had been too hasty in deciding that the cause of Spain was *utterly hopeless*; and at any rate proved that a substantial, though perhaps a temporary relief, must be given to Spain, by the appearance of opposition in any part of the Peninsula.

It is readily admitted, that whenever a Spanish army had come to action with a French force, though very inferior in numbers, the Spaniards had been

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* Bonaparte has at no period of the war held any part of Spain in subjection beyond those which have actually been occupied by his troops. As the difficulties of subsistence, or the demand for his forces in other quarters, have caused the abandonment of any town or province, the Spanish authority has instantly supplanted that of France. In the middle of January, 1809, the French appeared to have complete possession of Galicia; yet, in March, the Galicians, assisted only by two British frigates, regained possession of the town and harbour of *Vigo*;—in May recovered *Santiago*, the capital of the kingdom;—in June they repulsed Marshal Ney with 10,000 men at the bridge of San Payo, and induced the enemy to evacuate, not only *Corunna*, but *Ferrol*, one of the three great naval stations and arsenals of Spain. [Gazettes of 28th March, 13th April, 4th and 8th July.] *St. Andero* was also recovered by the patriots in June. [Gazette, 24th June.] The Marquis of Romana was unmolested at Villa Franca; Generals Blake and Reding were occupying the attention of the French in Catalonia, nor was it until June that they were defeated. Saragossa stood a *second* siege of five weeks, the bombardment having begun on the 10th of January, and the capitulation signed on the 19th of February. On the 22d of the same month the Duke of Albuquerque repulsed the French at Consuegra. Cuesta, as has been mentioned was defeated in March, and driven behind the Tagus. [New Annual Register, p. 344, &c. Bigland II. 499, &c. Buy's Narrative of the second Siege of Saragossa.]

almost uniformly defeated; but none of these defeats appeared to diminish the number of men in arms, nor to give to the enemy a permanent occupation of the country in which they were sustained.

But the rupture between France and *Austria*, which was by this time no longer doubtful, had given a new character to the war, and was indeed a new circumstance, which rendered inapplicable the opinions formed on the experience of the prior campaign. By this rupture, the situation of the French in Spain became avowedly "*rather critical* *," and the "*most* "*dreadful consequences*" were apprehended from it; —surely it was not presumptuous to expect, that the danger of the French position would be encreased, and the dreadful consequences accelerated, by the presence of a British force in Spain †.

One thing it was, at any rate, important for us to avoid; the charge, on the part of an ally, whose cause we have espoused with unprecedented warmth, of having deserted it with unjustifiable levity.

I contend, then, on the whole, that ministers were justified, not only in anticipating an operation on

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* General *Kellerman's* letter to Marshal Soult, Valladolid, 31st March 1809. [Cobbett's Pol. Reg. XVI. p. 26.]

† "As Government," says Captain Pasley, "chose to make a "second effort, I humbly conceive, with all due regard to the "memory of that great man, (Sir *John Moore*) that the series of "important events subsequent to his retreat, has proved, that "though the army under his command was inadequate for deci- "ding the fate of Spain, still it was capable of doing something, "fully capable at least of *maintaining its footing in the Peninsula,* "*in which it might have derived considerable assistance from the* "*Spaniards; and as the war between* FRANCE *and* AUSTRIA "*broke out immediately afterwards, such a system would have* "*been not merely practicable, but highly advantageous to the* "*common cause of* SPAIN, *of* GERMANY, *and of* GREAT BRITAIN." [P. 201-2.]

the side of Spain, and in conjunction with a Spanish force, as possibly the wisest step in the defence of Portugal, but in looking to such a renewed co-operation, as likely still to produce a beneficial influence upon the affairs of Spain, and upon the general state of the war.

But this view of the subject, although very useful towards estimating the importance of the campaign of 1809, is not necessary in its justification. Sir Arthur Wellesley was *not* instructed to undertake, nor did he undertake, general operations in Spain.

In obedience to the instructions which he had actually received, he landed at Lisbon on the 22d of April *. Previously to that period, Marshal Soult had penetrated Portugal from Galicia, and had obtained possession, on the 29th of March †, of Oporto, one of the principal objects of the country. On the 10th of May Sir Arthur Wellesley attacked and beat his enemy on the Vouga; on the 12th compelled him to cross the Douro, and regained possession of Oporto ‡; followed him to the very frontier of Galicia, with a rapidity which obliged him to throw away his cannon, equipments and baggage, and to evacuate the kingdom, with the loss of nearly a fourth of his army §. On the 18th of May not a French soldier remained in Portugal.

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* Sir Arthur Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh, Lisbon, 27 April. [Papers I. No. 14.] The force left at Lisbon under Sir John Cradock had been already reinforced. [Eliot, 195.]

† Eliot, 194; New Annual Register, 1809, p. 343.

‡ Sir Arthur Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh, Oporto, 12 May. [Papers I. No. 16, and Gazette Extraordinary of 25th May.]

§ Sir A. Wellesley to Lord Castlereagh, Monte Alegre, 18th May. [Same papers, No. 17. and Gazette, June 3.]

These facts being undeniable, or, in other words, *the expedition having been completely and rapidly successful*, it is unnecessary for me (however gratifying the task) to expatiate upon the military merit displayed by the Commander*. Whatever disposition there may be to depreciate the additional fame which

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* Great pains have been taken to depreciate the advantages over Soult. The whole is styled "*an affair with* Soult's *rear guard*;" and the loss sustained by the French is represented as simply that of a few marauding stragglers. Now it might be fairly argued, that, the service upon which an officer was sent being completely performed, the enemy having confessedly retreated in haste before him, abandoning to him the objects of contention, he is not to be blamed, although the course of the service should present to him no opportunities of brilliant victory.—But I conceive that there is sufficient evidence to prove that Soult's retreat was attended with much more precipitance and disaster than less judicious and active operations on our part could have produced. The *French Bulletin* states, that the determination to retreat was taken on the 10th of May. On this day the first engagement took place, and it is distinctly stated by the French, that their Van Gaurd was then attacked upon the *Vouga*. It thus appears probable, that the determination to retreat was the result of the first attack from the British, but at any rate, it is not true, that the attacks of Sir A. Wellesley were upon the *rear-guard of a previously* retreating army. Or, supposing that Soult made up his mind to retreat on the 10th, but *before* the action, it would still be quite clear that a retreat ordered when the enemy was almost within gun-shot, and conducted through a country bitterly incensed, must have been precipitate, and consequently disastrous, in a degree, fully warranting Sir Arthur's opinion, that Soult lost one fourth of his army.—The second action (*trifling* according to the French) took place, on the *Douro*, on the 12th. It is upon *this* occasion that the French speak of an affair with their *rear-guard*. But the point is in truth unimportant. The rapidity with which Sir Arthur crossed the river was totally unexpected by the French. Soult himself had scarcely escaped from his quarters; every appearance indicated his intention of offering a considerable resistance, and his opinion that he should be enabled to conduct a leisurely and orderly retreat. [See the Bulletin, dated Paris, 22d June; Cobbett, XVI. 23.]. Soult's arrival in Galicia is at the same time stated to have been "useful in dispersing the bands of "armed peasants, who had endeavoured to take possession of "Santiago and Lugo." We have already seen that the marshal failed in this object.

Sir Arthur Wellesley acquired by this operation, it is at least quite certain that neither *calamity* nor *disgrace* were incurred on the Vouga or the Douro!

The French tell us that the superiority of our force obliged them to evacuate Portugal; and, that they were thereby enabled to employ their force in reducing Galicia, where the Patriots had taken advantage of their absence. Even this statement is a strong illustration of the efficacy of our exertions, in the general cause of the Peninsula; yet, in *Galicia*, we must recollect, the French affairs, from this period, grew continually worse *!

But while the British General was employed in his expedition to the north, Marshal Victor had broken up on the Guadiana, and had crossed the Tagus at Alcantara on the 14th of May. Although, in marching to the northward, Sir Arthur Wellesley had not been inattentive † to the possible movements of the enemy on the Tagus, he now judged it expedient to direct his force against Victor. He accordingly marched by Braga to Coimbra and Abrantes ‡; thus protecting Lisbon, and obliging Victor to retire. This French corps, however, still remained "in a "menacing position in relation to the seat of govern-"ment in Portugal and Spain ||;" and Sir Arthur

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* See p. 111; and *Pasley*, p. 207.

† See his letter of the 27th April. He had left 8000 English and Portuguese at Abrantes, under Major-general *Mackenzie*, to watch Victor. See Eliot [p. 198.] for an account of the movements of Victor, and of the Portuguese troops, during this early period of the campaign.

‡ For these details, see Sir Arthur Wellesley's letters to Lord Castlereagh from Braga, 20 May; Coimbra, 31st May; Thomar, 7th June. [Papers, I. No. 18. 20. 21.]

|| Letter from Abrantes, 11th June. [No. 22.]

Wellesley resolved upon operations which should oblige him to retire from this position.

It was in pursuit of this object, so essential to the safety of Portugal *, the leading point of his instructions, that Sir Arthur Wellesley necessarily exerted the discretionary power with which he had been invested, by entering Spain, and connecting himself with the army of Cuesta †, the most effective of the Spanish armies.

He had been instructed to deliver and to defend Portugal, and he obeyed his instructions. He was empowered to promote this service by a co-operation with the Spaniards, and to connect with it as much assistance to Spain as would be consistent with the safety of Portugal and of his own army. A total

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* The probable necessity of this operation against Victor had been foreseen by Sir Arthur Wellesley before he moved upon the Douro. "I intend to move against Soult and attack him, if I "should be able to make any arrangement in the neighbourhood "of Abrantes which can give any security for the safety of this "place during my absence in the north. I am not quite certain, "however, that I should not do more good to the general cause "by contributing with General Cuesta against Victor; and I be-"lieve I should prefer this last if Soult was not in possession of *a "part of Portugal which is very fertile in resources, and of the "town of Oporto*; and if the operation with General Cuesta "would not take up time which may be profitably employed "against Soult. It is probable, however, that Soult will not re-"main in Portugal when I shall pass the Mondego; and, if he "should, I shall attack him; if he retires, I am sure that it will "be most advantageous to the common cause that we should re-"main on the defensive in the North of Portugal, and *act vigo-"rously with* CUESTA *against* VICTOR." Sir A. Wellesley to Mr. Frere, Lisbon, 24 April, 1809. [Papers. A. No. 3. Encl. 1.]

† Cuesta had been defeated in the end of March at Medellin on the Guadiana by the Duke of Belluno. [New Annual Register, 1809, p. 344; Bigland, II. 504.] At the present period he was at Llerena; but advanced again upon the Guadiana upon Victor's moving to the Tagus. [Sir A. Wellesley's letter from Coimbra, 31st May, I. No. 20; *Eliot*, ch. XII.]

misconception of the mode and degree in which Sir Arthur Wellesley used this discretion, in marching to Talavera, has produced the censures with which this campaign has been assailed *.

It has been supposed, or, at least pretended, that Sir Arthur Wellesley advanced into Spain with the view and with the hope of regaining Madrid, and driving the French behind the Ebro or the Pyrenees;

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* For instance,—"*Another corps*, as insufficient as Sir John Moore's to cope with the French force, *was sent into the heart of Spain*, when that country was over-run with victorious armies,—when the distractions and weakness of its government had increased,—when the most fanatical of our prophets foreboded the extinction of popular enthusiasm, and the native troops had given new proofs of their utter inability to stand before the legions of France. This gallant body of men, *after being weakened*, as before, *by* DETACHMENTS *and* SKIRMISHES *in* PORTUGAL, after being delayed, as before, for want of money and supplies, entered Spain, as before, immediately after three armies of Spaniards had been totally defeated by the enemy, and *moved towards the* CENTRE *of the Peninsula, exactly as before, without* ONE EARTHLY OBJECT *in view, but to take a look at the country and get near the French*.—The parallel indeed ends here; for it was only in the *planning* that the campaign of the North was copied. The British general was attacked in front by a superior force. *A rare mistake of the French general* and the extreme gallantry of English soldiers saved him from destruction, and EVEN enabled him to *repulse the enemy*; but a large army, *the very same that he had somewhat whimsically boasted of having* DESTROYED *a few weeks before*, came down upon his rear, and he was compelled to fall back upon Portugal with *the utmost rapidity*. Too happy to escape with any troops at all, he left his sick and wounded to the vanquished French. Scarcely hoping to carry off the victorious English, he left the "invincible Spaniards" to get one more beating; and was in this plight driven out of the country *which he came to save*, by one army which he has completely beaten, and *another which he had* ENTIRELY DESTROYED!" [No. 29, p. 232.] I need make no further reference. There are not in Great Britain, perhaps not in the world, *two* works in which it would be possible to find so great powers of composition, combined with so utter a disregard of justice, candour and truth. I wish that every sentence, clause and expression of this *compendious history*, may be steadily kept in view, while the facts of the campaign are under consideration.

and inasmuch as he never got further than Talavera, he is said to have been defeated in the object of his expedition, which is accordingly censured as imprudent, rash and wild! Yet the fact is, that he entered Spain with a specific object, which object he accomplished. That he was induced, by *any* consideration, to use his discretion in moving into Spain, is a matter of accusation with Lord Grey;—how justly, the motives and the result of his movements must jointly enable us to decide.

When the British army returned to Coimbra in the end of May, Victor, who (as has been stated *) previously threatened the Portuguese capital, being within a few leagues of the frontiers, and directly on the road to Lisbon, withdrew himself from that position, but still continued between the Tagus and the Guadiana †. To dislodge him from this position was the concern of the Spanish general Cuesta, the seat of whose government was also endangered by his presence, no less than of Sir Arthur Wellesley; a concerted plan, for this express purpose, was the natural consequence of this similarity of interests;—and such was accordingly arranged ‡ between the two commanders.—*To oblige* VICTOR *to retire* appears to have been the original extent of this combination: with the limits thus assigned to it, Cuesta was by no means satisfied §; nor ought our astonishment to be excited at his unwillingness to narrow the scope of operations, in which he was materially to assist, to a purpose in which he had only a secondary interest, and which appeared inferior to that to which the

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* P. 115.

† See Sir Arthur Wellesley's letter from Thomar, above cited.

‡ Letter from Abrantes, 11th June. [Papers, I. No. 22.]

§ Letter of 11th of June.

combined force was fairly competent. Such, apparently, were the motives which induced Sir Arthur Wellesley, on the 11th of June to "extend the object of his co-operation *" with Cuesta; and not only, as had formerly been its purpose, to oblige Victor to retire, but to gain, if possible, such an advantage over that corps of the French army, as should give greater permanence to the security of Portugal, and materially encrease the chance of success in Spain.

But it must be most clearly recollected, that this plan had its limits, and limits assigned to it, in great measure, by the very considerations which gave rise to Lord Grey's objections.

Finding it impossible to induce the Spanish General † to second, in a mode consistently with his own safety, a movement upon Victor's rear, Sir Arthur Wellesley proceeded to collect the allied force in his front; and on the 11th of July "arranged a plan of "operations upon the French army, which they "were to begin to carry into effect on the 18th, *if "the French should remain so long in their position* ‡." For he had, by this time, and before his retreat became more than justifiably hazardous, felt the diffi-

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* Same letter; and one also from Abrantes, of 17th June. [No. 23.]

† It was the proposal of the British general, that the Spaniard should remain in a strong position:—such a one as that by which "he had kept in check the French armies so long;"—while the British should endeavour to cut off Victor's retreat by the bridge of Almaraz. But Cuesta had not a secure position on the Guadiana, and could not be persuaded to draw further back. It was then intended that the two armies should join in the Guadiana, but Victor's retreat to Talavera induced Sir Arthur (with Cuesta's concurrence) to remain on the north of the Tagus. [Letter of 17th June.]

‡ Letter from Placentia, 15th July. [No. 26, and Gazette of the 12th of August, 1809.]

culty of marching through Spain; and fixed, accordingly, a limit to his operations of offence, acquainting the Spanish Commander, that "he should consider "*the removal of the enemy from the Alberché* as a "complete performance, on his part, of the engage- "into which he had entered on the 11th of July *."

The advance, therefore, to Talavera was a measure adopted for the specific purpose of relieving Portugal from the danger with which she was threatened by Victor; in which purpose we were to be assisted by the Spaniards, and, reciprocally, to give to their resistance every chance of success †, which could be derived either from the defeat of a considerable French army, or from the withdrawal of every corps from the distant provinces, in order to fight the great battle on the Tagus;—at a time, more especially, when BONAPARTE's success against Austria was more than ever doubtful ‡.

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* Letter from Talavera, 24th July, [No. 27] inclosing one written *on the 16th*, from *Placentia*, to Major-general O'Donoghue, Cuesta's adjutant-general;—"Nothing shall prevent me "from carrying into execution the arrangements which I settled "with General Cuesta, when I had the pleasure of seeing him, "although to do so will be attended with the greatest inconveni- "ence, on account of the deficiency of the means of transport, "which I then hoped that this country and Ciudad Rodrigo would "have afforded; but I think it but justice to the army under my "command, and to His Majesty, to determine that *I will under- "take no new operation*, till I shall have been supplied with the "means of transport which the army requires; and but fair and "candid to General *Cuesta*, to announce to him this determi- "nation at the earliest moment."

† Some objects might be added, *directly* affecting British interests. The relief of Galicia contributed materially to the safety of the Ferrol squadron, which was safely conveyed to Cadiz, and has subsequently been placed completely out of danger. According to Lord *Grey*, "a heavy responsibility rested upon ministers "in respect of the Spanish navy." Speech, 24th March, 1809. [Cobbett, XIII. 799.]

‡ Sir *A. Wellesley* had heard, at *Abrantes*, of the Battle of *Aspern*. Lord *Castlereagh's* speech, 1 Feb. 1810. [Cobb. XV. 290.]

With these inducements, then, neither sanguine of great success, nor confident of approaching glory, Sir ARTHUR WELLESLEY advanced towards the Alberché. After various proceedings* on the part of the Spaniard, little consonant either with the object of beating Victor separately, or with the limits assigned to the advance, (but in which Sir Arthur protected his ally, as far as was compatible with his own security,) the allied armies were attacked at *Talavera*;—not by Victor alone, but by Victor united with all the troops, which, when "*the danger* "*was imminent, and it was necessary to take decided* "*measures*,"—" it was in King Joseph's power to "oppose to his enemy †."—The attack was nevertheless repulsed;—I have no wish to exaggerate the glories of TALAVERA; but I cite the words of a Minister of War ‡, with whom Lord Grey sat in Coun-

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* The two armies having united at Oropesa on the 22d of July, Sir *A. Wellesley* proposed to attack *Victor*, who was then separately posted on the Alberché, on the 23d. This, *Cuesta*, for reasons which have never been explained, positively refused. In the night, *Victor* retired with much rapidity, in order to meet his reinforcements. The loss of this opportunity was unspeakably important.—On the 24th and 25th, *Cuesta*, of his own motion, followed the enemy to St. Ollalla, and even to Torrijos, but was attacked at *Alcabon* and driven back on the 26th.—General *Sherbrooke* advanced as far as *Casalegas*, to cover the retreat of *Cuesta*, who was at last persuaded to take up a very strong position at *Talavera*, on the right of the English.—In the French report, *Cuesta* is represented as contemplating, in these forward movements, a junction with *Vanegas*, but his own report shews that he had no such motive; nor any more precise object than "the "hope of reaching the enemy's rear-guard, or some portion of it." [Report made to King *Joseph*, published at Paris, 27th Sept. 1809. *Cuesta*'s report, Seville, 7 Sept. 1809, Cobbett's Political Register, XVI. 559; Sir A. Wellesley's letters from Talavera, of the 24th and 29th of July; Papers I. 27 and 28.]

† Report to King Joseph.

‡ Mr. WINDHAM. Speech on the Vote of Thanks to Lord Wellington, 1 Feb. 1810. [Cobbett, XV. 299.]

cil, when I profess that "the arguments I have "heard," from Lord Grey and others *, "do not "divest me of the opinion that *the battle of Talavera* "*was a* GLORIOUS VICTORY."—No man, in fact, has denied, that it was a victorious and destructive repulse of a vigorous and well-supported attack; that the British army maintained their ground after the battle, while the enemy thought it prudent to retire, or that the enemy himself confessed that "*the battle* "*was doubtful* †."—But the day was gained, it seems, through "*great faults*" and "*rare mistakes*" of the French, and by "*the extreme gallantry of British soldiers!*"—That the bravery of our troops mainly contributed to the victory, who can wish to doubt?—who can dare to doubt? But was this quality displayed, for the first time, at Talavera? Was it a *chance*, which Sir *Arthur Wellesley*, of all the Generals on our Staff, ought to have left out of his calculations?—Or, if it

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* Lord Grey opposed the Vote of Thanks in the House of Lords, 26 Jan. 1810; Lord *Wellesley's* reply, as well as that of Lord *Castlereagh* to a similar opposition in the House of Commons, ought to be read by every person wishing to form a correct judgement of the merits of our General. [Cobbett, XV. 140. 145. and 288.]

† "The battle of Talavera was *doubtful*. The French conducted their attack badly, and committed great faults. But the "allied army was superior to the French, as it consisted of 38,000 "Spaniards and 26,000 English, whilst the French army amounted "only to 45,000 men." [*Notes of the Moniteur* on the Debates in the House of Lords on thanking Lord Wellington; Cobbett, Pol. Reg. XVIII. 576.] And in a former *Moniteur* (28th Sept. 1809) "The English fought well; Victory at Talavera was "claimed on both sides." In reading the French *comparison of numbers*, we should bear in mind the following passages, in the *Moniteur* last cited: "We do not speak of the Spaniards; they "may be reckoned for a great deal in order to plunder isolated "individuals,—even to defend themselves behind a wall, but they "must be counted for hardly any thing in a pitched battle, *as the* "*English may have convinced themselves*." And again; "the "Spaniards cannot be reckoned at above *one third* in a pitched "battle." [*Sun*, 11th October 1809.]

could be supposed that there really was at Talavera, a more than ordinary display of British valour, from what possible circumstance could it spring?—Did our soldiers fight for a more than usual stake;—were they enthusiastic in the cause of their allies;—were they more than commonly exasperated against their enemy?—No: if they fought particularly well under General Wellesley, it was because by General Wellesley they were particularly well commanded, and because in him they placed a more than ordinary confidence.

But even this extreme gallantry, it is said, would have availed nothing, but for the *rare mistakes* of the Marshals of France!—Wherein those mistakes consisted, I leave to military men to discover; I know nothing but that they attempted successively the right, the centre, and the left of our line, and failed in each attack. But what if they did commit these "great faults?" Had French Marshals always been faultless? Was their superiority so surely established, that it was criminal, in 1809, for a British General, to oppose his own skill to that of a Frenchman? What thanks, then, do we not owe to him who first exploded this pusillanimous error,—and taught us, in his own person, the absurdity of our distrust *!

Even Lord Grey, it appears, considered this battle as a victory, if taken without reference to the prior and subsequent occurrences; for he would have

* Captain *Pasley* says, speaking of the French, "their *wonderful generalship* appears no less problematical; it at least "produces no great results when they are opposed to resolute "enemies. Even in their operations against the *Spaniards*," [as we shall presently see] "the French talk more often of the errors than of the talents of their own generals; and whenever "they have contended *with us*, they seem to have committed the "most unaccountable blunders; &c. &c." [P. 487.]

"cordially joined" in the vote of thanks, if he had seen nothing but the report of the battle *; but he took, it seems, "the general object of Lord Welling-"ton's advance into Spain to be that of driving be-"fore him the enemy's troops, *and obtaining posses-"sion of the Capital of* MADRID †!" And, in this point of view, it was natural enough that he should consider Lord Wellington as defeated in his object; for, assuredly, the battle of Talavera had no such splendid consequence, but was, on the contrary, followed by a retreat into Portugal.

Now, I trust that I have shewn, that the view of the subject, which, before Lord Wellington's proceedings had been explained in Parliament, and illustrated by his correspondence, Lord Grey might possibly be justified in forming, is a view, nevertheless, entirely mistaken.

Referring, then, to those which were in truth the purposes of the forward movement ‡, I ask, in the

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* Speech, 26 Jan. [p. 145.] Lord Grey might have been contented even with the *French* report, without relying upon the *expressions*. Their own *detail* of what passed at JOSEPH's head-quarters, *on the night of the 28th* and *morning of the 29th*, is decisive of the defeat which they had experienced. Ignorance, among the Generals of Division, of each other's movements; equal ignorance in the Commander; confused reports as to the state of the allies;—and as the result of the whole—that "Sebastiani had fallen back upon the reserve, with the 4th corps, "because the 1st corps was retiring;"—and—"*there was now "no time to deliberate;—it was necessary to follow this move-"ment.*" Even this report (which assumed the tone of success much more than the subsequent comments) speaks of the *mistakes* of General *Leval* as occasioning the failure on the left. [SUN, 11th, 12th, 13th Oct. 1809.] In the notes it is said, (by the French, who were the *attacking* party,) *the English* were beaten every time they attempted *to advance upon the French*.

† P. 141.

‡ See P. 120.

first place, whether the danger which threatened *Portugal* was not greatly diminished by the battle of Talavera?—The attack upon *Victor* singly, which was prevented only by the objections of *Cuesta* *, would have produced, no doubt, a more complete discomfiture; but it may be questioned whether even that more decisive, but more limited success, would have demonstrated more effectually to the French Marshals, the incompetency of their force, in the then state of Spain and of the war, to the projected invasion of Portugal. No man can possibly ascertain, whether, if the French army had not been repulsed and maimed at Talavera, a combined attack would have been made upon Portugal; but we may safely pronounce, that if such an attack was in contemplation, it was prevented by the battle of Talavera. Whether, looking only to the interests of Portugal, the anticipation of the attack was preferable to a more defensive policy, is an unimportant question, unless we leave out of the consideration, *the co-operation of* CUESTA. For it is certain, that if the British army had remained within the frontier of Portugal, no sense of reciprocal interest would have induced the Spanish Generals to connect their operations with those of Sir Arthur Wellesley, who would therefore have had to cope with the whole strength of France; now, without estimating highly the value of Spanish troops, in regular battles, I cannot doubt that the army of Cuesta, when he was at last persuaded to occupy the strong position on our right, marked out for him by Sir Arthur Wellesley, did contribute materially to the defeat of the enemy at Talavera †. With reference therefore to the safety

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* See P. 121.

† We need not, perhaps, estimate the Spaniards, for this purpose, at more than the proportion allowed by the *Moniteur*. One third of the force would probably have been sufficient for render-

of Portugal alone, the effects of the march into Spain, and of the battle of Talavera, were greatly beneficial.

But it would in fact be quite unfair, thus to narrow our views. Can it be doubted for a moment, that the battle of Talavera was advantageous to Spain? Can it be supposed, that if the armies of France had not met with the severe check, which they have in fact themselves acknowledged, they would have remained inactive; that they would have abstained from the invasion not only of Portugal, but of the southern provinces of Spain? Or if it should be imagined that they would, but for this discomfiture, as they actually did after it, have remained for the rest of the year strictly on the defensive, and on the right bank of the Tagus; would they, but for the movement of the British army, have evacuated the provinces of the north, leaving *Vigo*, *Corunna* and *Ferrol*, in the undisturbed possession of the Patriots? The successive and severe defeats * which the Spa-

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ing "Talavera an unattackable post."—When alluding to the Spanish army at Talavera, I must refer to a remark in Lord Grey's speech of 26 Jan. 1810, [p. 142.] that "the dispatch of the Spa-"nish General gave a very different account of the conduct of "troops, from that given in the dispatch of Lord Wellington."—I venture to aver, that Cuesta's report, bearing date, *Seville*, the 7th of *September*, was, as far as related to the battle of Talavera, *translated* from that of *Lord Wellington*, with a little interlarding of praise of his own countrymen. This, I think, was pretty clearly proved, from an accurate collation, in a series of papers under the head of "Military Operations," published in the *Morning Post* about that time.—The very *date* proves that the report was not formed upon *Cuesta's* own knowledge;—in fact, he had, immediately after the battle, written short and incomplete accounts, for which the report from Seville was afterwards substituted. [See Papers A. 12. Encl. 8 and 9.]

* Of the operations of the Spanish armies there are no very particular or certain accounts.—*Blake*, though defeated in Aragon, *according to the French*, on the 15th of June, [French Bulletin, 29th June; Cobbett, XVI. 26.] threw succours into *Gerona* in

nish armies experienced in the autumn and winter of 1809, form no exception to my observation, on the inactivity of the French. These disasters, if I may say so, were *sought for* by the Spaniards, who, against the advice of Lord Wellington and Lord Wellesley, attempted objects far beyond their reach.—But even, with the advantage of these successes, it was not until the ensuing year that the French extended themselves in the *South*, (where they have not, *to this day*, accomplished their principal object,) while in the *North* they have not even attempted to regain the ground, which, for the sake of opposing Sir Arthur Wellesley at Talavera, they abandoned in the summer of 1809.

But if it should be admitted that the measures of Sir Arthur Wellesley were in fact productive of considerable advantages, it would nevertheless be objected, in this case as in that of Sir *John Moore*, that they were more than counterbalanced by the concomitant disasters.

Such is, at least, the opinion of Lord Grey; but here again I must venture to suspect, that as his judgment of the *failure*, as he terms it, of the second

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October. I am far from subjecting the movements of this army to the general reflexion cast upon the Spanish Commanders. But *Areizaga*, who succeeded *Cuesta*, certainly brought upon himself his defeat at *Ocanha* in November. [French and Spanish Bulletins, Cobbett, XVI. 988 and 990; and New Annual Register, 353.] Nor can the Duke *del Parque*, who had been in October very usefully successful at *Tamames* against the division of *Ney*, then commanded by *Marchand*, [Gazettes, 11 and 28 Nov. 1809] be excused for placing himself in the way of disaster at *Alba de Tormes*, where he was routed by *Kellermann* in November. [*Sun*, 3d and 8th Jan. 1810]—I do not pretend to give accurate accounts of these occurrences, or even references to them; there were French accounts of still other victories, but of none which produced any great result, until towards the end of *January* 1810, when Soult passed the *Sierra Morena*.

expedition into Spain, was built upon an idea, perfectly erroneous, of its motives and object, so his estimate of the consequent misfortunes is founded upon a misconception, not less general or important, as well of their causes as of their extent.

Accurately to appreciate or compare the good and evil of the proceeding, if not impossible, is certainly beyond my powers; Lord Wellington (for the ministers are surely not responsible) might, I am confident, be satisfied to let the advantages gained by the battle of Talavera be set against the losses there sustained, and those of the march which followed; his character, I am persuaded, would not suffer, although his measures were put to the severest of trials, the Trial by *Result*:—but a recollection of certain other occurrences is necessary, as well for doing perfect justice to Lord Wellington's intentions, as for explaining the degree in which he failed in their fulfilment, and the causes and consequences of his partial failure, occasioned or encreased by these untoward events.

It has already been mentioned that the plan of operations of which the march of the British army to the Alberché formed a part, was arranged between the allied Generals, at Placentia, on the 11th of July. It was then settled that Vanegas, with the army of *la Mancha*, should advance from the province of Toledo, towards *Arganda* *, where he was to be on the 22d or 23d of July, so as to draw off the attention of *Sebastiani*, (then occupied according to the French report †, in watching his motions) as well as

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* See Lord Wellington's letter to Lord Wellesley, Badajoz, 30 Oct. 1809. [Papers H. 4. p. 15.] *Arganda* is about four leagues from *Madrid*.

† Cited in p. 121.

to threaten the capital *. Although *Vanegas* was under the command of Cuesta, to whose operations this movement was essentially necessary, the *Central Junta* countermanded the orders † which had been given by *Cuesta*, and *Vanegas* occupied himself in an useless cannonade of Toledo. The effect was, as had been foreseen, that the combined armies were engaged with the enemy's concentrated force ‡. Thus, in the very outset, was the British General deceived and thwarted. Ignorant, however, of this unaccountable proceeding, faithful to his engagement, and willing to accelerate as much as possible the defeat of *Victor*, he proposed to attack him *on the 23d*;—the motive of Cuesta's *objection* to this proposal remains unexplained; but it had, no doubt, a very serious effect, greatly increased by the defection of *Vanegas*, upon the success of the subsequent operations. If SEBASTIANI, and King JOSEPH, and VICTOR united, could make no impression upon the allied army, it can scarcely be doubted, that *Victor* alone would have been utterly discomfited. Although such a victory, would not, as I apprehend, have been followed, under all difficulties, by permanent operations in Spain, it would have been accomplished in all probability, with a loss much inferior to that sustained at Talavera; and would have enabled Sir Arthur Wellesley, if the approach of SOULT and his three corps had made an early retreat

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* Sir *Robert Wilson* with a corps of 8 or 10.000 Spaniards and Portuguese, was at Escalona, in communication with Madrid; being so placed as either to support the Spanish troops at the passes on the left of the allies, or to favour the movement of *Vanegas*.

† The orders of the Junta were afterwards withdrawn, but not till it was too late. [Lord Wellesley's Speech, p. 149.]

‡ Letter of 20 Oct.

adviseable, to have effected it without the sacrifice which accompanied his passage of the Tagus.

If, on the other hand, General Wellesley had ventured to oppose himself to SOULT, (as he had intended, even under the circumstances which took place, *had* CUESTA *retained his post at* TALAVERA) there can be little doubt but that he would again have so completely maimed him *, as to have justified the utmost loss which could have been expected on our part.

On the whole, then, I feel justified in contending that Sir Arthur Wellesley's plans were feasible and judicious, and that they were materially deranged by the conduct of the Spanish Generals.—Had his prompt and combined disposition been followed up, the corps of VICTOR would have been separately and severely beaten; and the three corps of SOULT, NEY and MORTIER, united under Soult, would have been defeated and rendered incapable of annoying the allies for a considerable time in any further operations; the corps of SEBASTIANI, and King JOSEPH's reserve, would have been fully occupied, as long as their movements continued to be important, by VANEGAS, and the defence of MADRID †. It would be in vain to speculate upon the further results which would have followed the separate defeat of Victor, but a re-

* Of the force of *Soult*, after he was joined by *Ney* and *Mortier*, I cannot form an exact estimate; but it is probable that it was not inferior to that of the French army at Talavera;—the *Moniteur* estimates the *whole* force opposed to us, at 170 battalions, and 80 or 90 squadrons; of which 86 battalions and 40 squadrons are stated to have composed the 1st and 4th corps, and the reserve, engaged at Talavera.—It should also be recollected, that previously to an attack upon *Soult*, the three brigades of reinforcement would have joined Sir Arthur Wellesley from Lisbon.

† It must not be supposed that, on this occasion, the French would have acted upon the system of tactics which has been attri-

collection of times and places will surely satisfy us that by such a success, the losses sustained by the British would have been avoided, or fully compensated.

But, leaving these speculations, or rather, I trust, these just calculations of the result of reasonable expectation, I ask, what, after all, were these sad misfortunes and disasters,—which, in Lord Grey's mind, appear to have obliterated every consideration, either of cause or consequence?—Let us resume our narrative.

Marshal Soult had been commanded, independently of the march of the allied army to the Alberchê, "*to march against the English, seek them out* "*wherever they might be, and engage them* *." With this view he was to unite under himself his own corps, which then occupied *Salamanca* and *Zamora*, Ney's, which was in *Valladolid* and its environs, and Mortier's, which occupied *Benavente*, *Astorga*, and *Leon* †.

It would thus appear, as I must observe in passing, that it did not rest with Sir Arthur Wellesley to choose a system of mere defence, but that

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buted to them, perhaps rather too generally, by disregarding, for a time, all objects *but one*. They certainly would not have risked the possibility of *Venegas* entering *Madrid*, even though they expected to return to it in a week.

* Report to King Joseph.

† "The latter corps," says the Report which I am citing, "had in its front the troops commanded by Romana, and the in-" surgents of Galicia and the Asturias." I have understood that a movement by *Romana*, so as to harass this corps on its march to the Southward, was a part of the arrangement made at Placentia;—but Romana had not left Corunna in the first week of August.

these corps from the North would at all events have sought him out, and, if possible, have brought him to action ;—VICTOR continuing, all the time, in his "*menacing position.*"

Within a few days after the battle of Talavera, the British General was advised of the movements of Soult * ; the intelligence became so serious, that it was agreed between the allied Generals, that the British army should march towards Placentia to oppose the enemy †, while the Spaniards remained in their "unattackable post ‡" at Talavera, in charge of the sick and wounded of the British, for the re-

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* Letter to Lord Castlereagh from Talavera, 1st August. [Papers, K. 2.] Lord Wellington has been blamed for not having calculated sufficiently upon the probability of Soult's advance, and for not having taken sufficient precautions in order to arrest his progress. To this I answer in the first place, that the advance of this small force, for a specific and limited purpose, neither required nor admitted of that perfect provision for every point, which might perhaps be thought essential, in the commencement of general operations against a superior force—the question would therefore still turn upon the expediency and importance of the movement against *Victor*.—It was impossible to detach a British force for the occupation of the passes through which the three corps came down upon the Tagus ; but as it was a kind of service to which the Spanish troops had on former occasions shewn themselves competent, Sir Arthur Wellesley was justified in expecting that they would offer at least a temporary resistance. He had accordingly, when at *Placentia*, taken steps for securing the Puertos de Banos, and Perales, by Spanish and Portuguese troops. [Letter to Marshal Beresford, 17th July. Encl. 1 in K. No. 3.] The former, however, was abandoned by the Spaniards without firing a shot, so that the enemy entered Placentia on the 2d of August. [Letter from Deleytosa ; and that of 30th Oct. to Lord Wellesley.] See also, for this charge and the answer, the speeches of Lord *Lansdowne* and Lord *Wellesley*, on the motion of the former, 8th June, 1810. [Cobb. XVII. 472 and 484.]

† Letter from Deleytosa, 8th August. [K. No. 3, and Gazette of 2d September.]

‡ So styled in the Report to King Joseph.

moval of whom, however, from a situation in which they were certainly too far advanced, CUESTA was requested to take immediate measures *.

Sir Arthur Wellesley then proceeded as far as Oropesa, where he found that the enemy had arrived from Placentia at *Naval-Moral*, whereby they were between him and the bridge of *Almaraz*.—At this period CUESTA, without any previous communication with Sir Arthur Wellesley, (who in vain endeavoured to detain him †), but upon a professed idea of the incompetency of the British force, left his strong position at Talavera,—thus *abandoning our hospital*, and leaving VICTOR at liberty,—and joined our army at Oropesa.

It thus became probable, that the allied army would have to contend with the whole force of the enemy,—(excepting only such small portion as should be necessary to watch *Vanegas*)—without a safe retreat, with short provisions and deficient means of transport ‡. This would have been an undertaking

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* Letter of 8th of August; and enclosure, dated Oropesa, 3d Aug. to General O'Donoghue.—That *half* of the army should proceed against Soult, was the proposal of *Cuesta*. Sir A. Wellesley offered either to go or stay, with the whole of the British; and on Cuesta's giving him the choice, he preferred to go.

† Letter to General O'Donoghue, 3d Aug. [Enclosure 7, in No. 3.]

‡ Another charge against Lord Wellington (in which Ministers also are very unjustly implicated), rests upon his supposed neglect of the means for supplying his army. Here again, as indeed in every step of the enquiry, it is necessary to refer to the limitation of his object; and here this reference is more especially just and important, because the failure of supplies was the very ground of the limitation.—It has been shewn [p. 120.] that as early as the 16th of July, notice had been given to Cuesta, that without further assistance, the British army must cease to cooperate with him. The same conviction was expressed by Sir Arthur Wellesley in every letter to the King's Minister at Seville,

unjustifiably hazardous; far beyond the instructions under which Sir Arthur Wellesley acted, and the specific limits of his concert with CUESTA; he therefore now determined upon retiring to a defensive line upon the *Tagus*, which he accordingly crossed on the 4th of August at the bridge of *Arzobispo*, leaving about 1,500 of his wounded at Talavera *. He continued his march, by *Deleytosa* to *Jaraicejo*, where he remained *from the 11th to the 20th* of August, "with his advanced posts on the Tagus, near "the bridge of Almarez," within gun-shot, almost, of the enemy. But as the "distress for want of pro-"visions, and the means of transport †," which he had incessantly and in vain represented to the Spanish Government, continued still to encrease, he was at last induced to act upon the intention which he had from the commencement professed ‡, by with-

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[To Mr. Frere, 16th and 24th July; A. Enc. 1 in No. 11; and Enc. 1 in No. 13.] It constituted one of the reasons for *not* marching against Victor, which were to be balanced against the many reasons in favour of the advance; a little more or less weight may be attributed to either side, without any crimination of Lord Wellington's decision.—But the evil effect of the decision, as to the point of supplies, has assuredly been much exaggerated. The great deficiency was in bread, and in the means of transport, and the army certainly suffered, from these causes, some inconvenience, but nothing like disaster. Nor was the discipline of the troops at all injured; Lord Wellington very judiciously ordered, that while deficient rations were issued, the usual stoppages from the pay of the men should not be made. [Letter to Lord Wellesley, 30th October, 1809.] Nothing can possibly be further from my wishes, than to exonerate the Administration at the expence of their General; but I am sure that no man who reads Lord Castlereagh's letters to Lord Wellington, can say that the Government dictated his movements, or the degree in which he should rely upon the Spaniards. Lord Wellington exercised his own discretion, and, as I contend, justifiably, safely, and advantageously.

* The remaining 2,000 were brought off. Letter of 8th Aug.

† Letter from Truxillo, 21 Aug. [K. 5. and Gazette, 9 Sept.]

‡ See pp. 119, 120, and his letter to Mr. Frere, 24th July; and

drawing altogether from Spain. He retreated accordingly to *Truxillo*, whence he retired, after some days, by *Merida* to *Badajoz*, on the frontiers of Portugal *.

In this movement, coupled with the loss of the 1500 wounded, consists the "*misfortune, calamity,* "*and disgrace*," which in Lord Grey's opinion, were the only results of our second entrance into Spain!

The loss of the wounded was unquestionably an occurrence very much to be lamented, but if we bear in mind the favourable results which were actually produced by the battle of Talavera,—or the difficult operations which would have been necessary, and the sacrifices which would have been reasonably expected, *if that battle had not been fought*, we ought not to attribute to this, its only lamentable consequence, the character of a severe misfortune. Sir *Arthur Wellesley's* march to *Talavera*, like that of Sir *John Moore* to *Sahagun*, was an operation necessarily involving risk; the retreat from Sahagun, before any battle was fought †, was unavoidably ac-

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a recapitulation of these proceedings in his letter to Lord Wellesley, from Badajoz, 30 October, 1809, cited in p. 128.

* Letters from Truxillo, 21st August; and Badajoz, 4th September. [Nos. 5. and 7.] The dates are particularised, in order to counteract an idea which has been strangely enough entertained, that this retreat was *precipitate*. "It is rather curious," says Captain Eliot, who was with the army, "to see how this retreat is construed by some of our Opposition Journals into *one the most rapid and disastrous*: the fact is, that with the exception of two or three days, when in an open country, *the army never moved more than eight or ten miles a day, sometimes not half that distance*; meat was plentifully provided, but bread the country did not afford. The only time we experienced any great scarcity of the former was during the two days' action, when our minds, as well as bodies, were too actively employed to feel the want of it." [Page 133.]

† I beg to be understood here as stating facts, and not as giv-

companied with severe losses;—by the battle of Talavera, Sir Arthur Wellesley was enabled to conduct his march from Oropesa * to Jaraicejo, without any of the daily and accumulated losses and mishaps, injurious to the spirit and discipline of the soldier, which are natural in a precipitate retreat; while on the other hand, he made the one great but definite sacrifice, incident to the sudden abandonment of an offensive operation, however glorious or successful.

In this case, as in the former, I avoid the discussion of military details; I trust that I have shewn, that the small portion of responsibility which the Ministers incurred in investing their General with a discretionary power of entering Spain, was such as they ought not to have avoided. I trust that I have shewn, that the exercise of this discretion, while as a warlike operation, it has not been unattended with *misfortune*, has produced none which can be designated as *calamity*, much less any thing which can be stigmatized as *disgrace* †!

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ing opinions. There were very many reasons for fighting at Talavera, which did not exist at any of the periods in which, as has been thought by some, Sir *John Moore* ought to have risked a battle. Indeed, without going into details, the *Austrian war* might perhaps in this, as in many other points, be considered as completely distinguishing the two cases.

* The movement from Talavera *to* Oropesa, was *not* a retreat, nor was the march from Jaraicejo occasioned by the strength or movements of the enemy. From Oropesa to the defensive position on the left of the Tagus the movement was necessarily rapid, but not so as to occasion *disaster* of any kind.

† The extraordinary combination of brilliant and dangerous talent, cited in p. 117, should now be re-perused. The reader has now seen the nature of the "*detachments and skirmishes in* PORTUGAL;" and of the "*one earthly object*," something more than that of "taking a look at the country," with which Sir A. Wellesley moved *towards* the *centre*" (how artfully managed!) "of the *peninsula*." He has, possibly, appreciated the *good luck* of

Those, even, who consider the Castilian campaign as an unsuccessful experiment, may be satisfied that the experiment was called for, by the state of the war *, by the interests of our allies, and perhaps even by the honour of our arms. —Those who admit, as I have stated it †, the importance of the service rendered to *Spain* by the battle of Talavera, will derive from a contemplation of the events of 1809, a satisfaction more perfect and unmixed.

But while I thus limit and qualify the merits of our operations in Spain, and of the policy pursued toward that part of the peninsula, I apply no such reserve or doubt, to our proceedings in *Portugal*.

Talavera. He has certainly convinced himself, that the "*boast of having destroyed*, a few weeks before, the large army which came down from the north;" is INVENTED by the Writer!—He has doubtless seen, that this army from the north consisted, not only of *the very same* which Sir A. Wellesley had (not "entirely destroyed," but) beaten and expelled from Portugal, but of TWO OTHERS also, with neither of which had the British been engaged. —And lastly, he must have ascertained the "*rapidity*" with which Sir Arthur Wellesley fell back upon Portugal.

I have here only mentioned the gross and glaring perversions. But, in fact, scarcely two words are put together, without a calumnious implication. "Another army," for instance, "sent "into the heart of Spain," as if such had been the *order* of *Government*.—"*Invincible* Spaniards"—so marked and placed, as if the expression had been used by Lord *Wellington*.

I could add much on the comparison and *contrast* of this campaign with that of 1808; but I presume that where the representation of one of the objects of comparison is so utterly incorrect, it would be thought idle to examine the correctness of the contrast; and it is not with laurels torn from the brow of one honoured and lamented soldier—that *I* wish to adorn the temples of another.

* See p. 112. † See p. 126.

To Portugal, not four years ago, Lord Grey was willing to ship our troops, "*as fast as the means of* "*transport could be provided;*"—for Portugal, not four years ago, "*there was no exertion in the power of this country*, in pecuniary assistance, or in naval or military succours*," which, *if she would take vigorous measures for her own defence*, Lord Grey would not have advised his Majesty to make.

Now, then, when reviewing the state of the nation, whose protection was thus generously promised to Portugal;—in estimating the power and success of the enemy, against whom she was to be defended,—in enquiring, how far, by any exertions of England, that power has been diminished, or that success impeded;—in arraigning his successors in the administration for a fatal deviation from his own system of war, and lamenting over the consequent calamity and disgrace,—in what situation does Lord Grey find *Portugal?*—In a careful and systematic representation of errors and misfortunes, to which, in the conduct of his successors, he cannot discover one exception, what are the blunders which he censures,—what the calamities which he bewails, in exposing their demeanour towards Portugal?

He omits the subject altogether! But if retaining a portion of his former attachment to this interesting country, he had condescended to notice her actual situation, Lord Grey must have thus spoken of Portugal.

He must have told his noble auditors, that the views of Mr. Fox, of Mr. WINDHAM, of Lord GRENVILLE, and of himself, in regard to the importance of preserving Portugal from France, were

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* See p. 72.

entertained equally by their successors; and that, *by those successors*, PORTUGAL *had been defended.*

He would have said, that almost from the day on which Sir Arthur Wellesley first landed in Portugal *, to that on which he delivered his speech, the subjugation of the kingdom had been prevented;—by "*the aid in money, troops, and ships* †," which his Majesty has furnished, in conjunction with the "vigorous and effectual measures of defence" adopted by Portugal herself.

If I were disposed to discuss merely upon the argument *ad hominem*, the expediency and importance of attempting to defend Portugal, I can hardly imagine a topic, which upon that mode, could admit of a more perfect triumph.—It is impossible to conceive any reason for defending Portugal in 1806, which did not exist in 1808, and 1810. There are new circumstances, it is true; but how do they operate?—The knowledge, surely, afforded by the *treaty of Tilsit*, does not render it less important to preserve from the power of Bonaparte, the fleets and harbours of Portugal; nor does the *revolution in Spain* render it less desirable to maintain Portugal as a free and friendly state ‡.

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* See p. 82. † See p. 72.

‡ As to the new circumstances bearing upon the *practicability* of the attempt, besides the Austrian war which was temporary, see pp. 64, and 107—8. It is hardly worth while to notice, as a difference operating the other way, that the army expected to invade Portugal in 1806, was to consist only of 30,000 men;—because it will probably not be contended, that Bonaparte had any other reason for limiting his force to that amount, than his opinion that it would be sufficient for his purpose. Or, if it should be said, either that he could not, or would not, *speedily*

Yet Lord Grey, in effect, treats PORTUGAL as *one of the provinces of the Spanish peninsula*;—and puts the preservation of that kingdom, upon no higher ground of expediency and advantage, than that of *Galicia* or *Catalonia*.

This neglect of Portugal, in a representation of the motives and success of the peninsular war, renders it equally incomplete and unfair. In order to supply the omissions of Lord Grey, it is necessary, in this place, to resume the summary of events *.

The instructions originally given to Lord Wellington † remained in force: "his Majesty had never "ordered, but had only permitted him to carry on "such operations, in Spain, as he might think pro-"per, upon his own responsibility, and as were con-"sistent with the safety of Portugal,"—"for the de-"fence of which country the British army had been "sent to the peninsula ‡." The confidence reposed by the Spanish Government in Lord Wellington and the British army, certainly encreased after the battle of Talavera, notwithstanding the subsequent abandonment of offensive operations. General *Cuesta* §, of whose proceedings Lord Wellington had made a formal complaint, was permitted to resign his com-

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augment it, and that *in the mean time* we might with good policy assist our ally, the whole case on the other side would by those admissions be given up.

* From p. 134. † P. 109.

‡ Sir A. Wellesley to Lord Wellesley, Merida, 24 Aug. 1809. [Papers B. Enc. D. in No. 5.]

§ General Cuesta anticipated the Junta, by resigning on the 12th of August, on account of ill health; but it appears by Lord Wellesley's letter of the 21st August, that the Junta were well disposed to receive our remonstrances, and made a merit of their acquiescence. [Papers 1810, B. Nos. 3. and 4. 2d Encl. 1.]

mand. The Junta being extremely averse to the withdrawal of the British army from Spain, made great promises of ample and regular supplies, appeared to acquiesce in every suggestion of the British General or Ambassador, and finally offered to Lord Wellington a corps of 12,000 men, under his own command. But Lord Wellington was of opinion that no specific offensive operation was at that time practicable, or would be useful either to Portugal or Spain, and that general operations in Spain, were, in the relative state of the armies, quite out of the question; he therefore declined the acceptance of the Spanish force, which might have committed him to a continuance in concerted measures, or involved him in the defence of the Guadiana, (the then object of the Junta)—an operation which he thought not practicable, against a superior force, and which he could not, at any rate, connect with the defence of Portugal *.

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* When Lord *Wellesley* was sent to Spain as Ambassador, he was instructed to communicate with Lord *Wellington* on the possibility of carrying on offensive operations, with a British army of 30,000. It was left to Lord Wellington to determine upon the practicability of this measure, which, without his concurrence, was not to be mentioned to the Spanish Government; nor was it to be adopted, unless it should be considered as the best means of saving Portugal.—*Cadiz* was to be demanded, or not, according to Lord Wellington's opinion of its necessity.—In case of the British army retreating into Portugal, a garrison for Cadiz was to be offered, independently for the defence of that kingdom.

The papers which refer to the period between the battle of Talavera are too voluminous for citation, or for particular reference; but those chiefly to be consulted are as follow:—Papers A. from No. 14. and Papers B. particularly Lord Wellington's letters to Lord Wellesley, from *Truxillo*, 21st Aug. [B. No. 4. Encl. 8.] from *Merida*, 24th and 31st Aug. and 1st of Sept. [No. 5. Encl. 4, 5, and 11.] and *Badajos*, 3d Sept. and 30th Oct. before mentioned.—His dispatches to the Secretary of State [in Papers I. and K.] extend to the 16th of November. The instructions to Lord Wellesley, of 12th Aug. [in D.] and his Lordship's dispatches from Seville, especially those of the 4th Aug. 2d and 15th Sept. [B. Nos. 4, 5, and 6.]

As long, however, as a compliance with the wishes of the Spaniards, by remaining within their frontier, was not inconsistent with the main object of his instructions, he retained his position at Badajos. But early in December, the French, no longer weakened by the war on the Danube, indicating a disposition to renew the offensive, and even threatening *Ciudad Rodrigo*, a point of much importance, Lord Wellington took up the position in the centre provinces of Portugal, north of the Tagus, in which he still remained, at the period of Lord Grey's Speech. In this position, he could most effectually protect the most valuable points of Portugal, while he possessed at the same time the means of an easy and secure retreat, in the event of a reverse *.

By this time France had no other war than that of Spain and Portugal; BONAPARTE, whose estimate of Spanish troops and commanders had, from an early period, been very low, had in fact no other enemy than Lord WELLINGTON. So convinced was he of his ability to destroy this feeble foe, that he publicly ridiculed in his *Moniteur* the attempt to defend Portugal, the subjugation of which he stated to have been, up to that time, *retarded by the war with Austria* †. Lord *Wellesley*, it was sneeringly said, *pretended* to defend Portugal, Lord *Wellington* would give him better advice, by adopting the plan of *nobly embarking in his transports* ‡.

In order to accelerate this desired consummation, thus confidently expected at Paris, a new Com-

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* On this subject, see Capt. Eliot's Treatise, chap. 5. and 6.

† Notes on the Speech at the opening of the Session, 1810. [Cobb. XVII. 314.]

‡ Notes on the debates on thanking Lord Wellington. [*Ib.* 661.]

mander was selected for the French armies; MASSENA collected his forces on the frontier *: Portugal, which up to that moment, *twelve months from the expulsion of Soult*, had not been entered by a French soldier, was now to be overwhelmed and subdued. The time was now approaching when the *Imperial Eagles* were to be *planted on the fortresses of Lisbon* †. Lord Wellington and his army, constituted in the judgment of Bonaparte, the only obstacle to his success; and a force, much more than competent to his overthrow, was now approaching his lines.

Such was the state of the war in Portugal, when Lord Grey was lamenting, in anticipation, the ultimate failure of our expeditions, and estimating the disasters consequent upon the subjugation of the whole peninsula! In a mind even less deeply impressed than Lord Grey's, with a sense of the martial superiority of France, fear might at such a moment be predominant. But he not only states his doubts and his fears,—he reasons as if they were already realized, he predicts a failure, and argues from his own foreboding as from an accomplished fact.

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* See his Proclamation, on assuming the command, 12 May, 1810. [SUN, 25 June.]. It had been said in the *Moniteur* on the 18th February, that the favourable state of affairs in Spain not requiring the presence of *Bonaparte* himself, his journey was indefinitely postponed;—but that the Duke of *Abrantes* (JUNOT) was *in the course of a month to enter* PORTUGAL *with a considerable army, to put a period to the war in the peninsula*, BY DRIVING THE ENGLISH OUT OF THAT COUNTRY. [SUN, 3d March, 1810.]

† This had been said as long ago as Sept. 1809, and it was waggishly proposed that Lord Wellington, *who, in the course of the winter, would be driven into the Tagus, and forced to evacuate Portugal*, should be styled DUKE of LISBON. [See *Moniteurs* of 28th and 30th Sept. 1809. SUN, 11th October.]

The crisis was assuredly awful; it justified much doubt, and anxiety, and apprehension. Nothing but Lord WELLINGTON, with the troops, and the influence, and the character of Great Britain, stood in the way between Massena and success. To one only point, in the whole region of that empire of which he covets the dominion, was the attention of Bonaparte directed as an object of his arms; all the adventitious causes which had hitherto retarded its accomplishment were removed, and it remained only to be seen, whether the idea of thwarting the great conqueror in a favourite expectation, by the arms and the counsels of Great Britain, was or was not a ridiculous fancy.

Up to this period, be it recollected, Lord Wellington had accomplished all that had been expected from him,—much more than had, (with the single exception of the expulsion of the French from Egypt) been accomplished, for years, by a British force: now, that there remained no effective Spanish army, to arrest the progress of the enemy, and no continental war to divert his attention, Lord Wellington's ability to fulfil the instructions which he had received in a very different state of affairs, had become the object of a doubtful experiment, of which, to him, the success would be very highly creditable, and the failure not at all disgraceful,

But Ministers, it may be said, ought not to have suffered the experiment to be tried.—Let him who is disposed to acquiesce in this observation, be prepared to name *the period*, at which we ought to have abandoned our enterprise. He must be ready to say, whether he censures altogether the employment of the troops in the peninsula in 1808;—whether he thinks, that at the commencement of the Austrian war, in the spring of 1809, we ought to have evacuated Portugal;—whether having been

previously justified in attempting her defence, we ought to have left her to her fate after the peace of Vienna;—or, lastly, whether we ought to have recalled Lord Wellington, in 1810, at the precise moment in which the fate of the kingdom seemed about to be decided.

It is easy for a man to say,—that, as things have turned out, he wishes that we had not mixed ourselves with the fate of Portugal; that although Bonaparte has met with unexpected difficulties, that he is now sensible of them; and that, as he has done on greater occasions, he will exert himself to surmount them, and succeed at last! The true questions are, whether we ought from the commencement, or at what subsequent period, to have let Portugal fall under the dominion of our enemy, without any attempt on our part to avert her fate.

The proceedings of 1806, 1807, and 1808, of which enough has already been said, had perhaps not so committed us with Portugal as to create an imperious call for the expedition of 1809; but when that expedition was undertaken, the employment of our troops in the peninsula stood upon a foundation of policy, distinct from, and superior to, that which dictated the defence of Portugal. Had Bonaparte, at that time, been aware of the difficulties of his enterprise, he *could not* have surmounted them without sacrifices and exertions, which would have raised our defence of Portugal into *a diversion of incalculable importance* in the general war.

It has been the usual policy of this country to connect with our measures of diversion in favour of continental allies, such more immediately *British objects* as might, in case of failure in the larger pur-

pose, compensate us for the sacrifices and expences of our expedition. It has seldom, perhaps never, happened, that we have been able so to connect the two projects, as to satisfy our ally; nor have we failed unfrequently in the *British* object. We have at least always been accused, of attending too much to England, and too little to Europe. These imputations have not always been just *; those who made them have not attended sufficiently to the difficulty of assembling and *transporting*, in good time for useful co-operation, a force strong enough to ensure its own safe retreat in case of a reverse. But I believe it would be difficult to point out a case of continental enterprise with the view to diversion, in which the objections have not been made, as well by our allies, as by the opponents of the government of the day.

Now, I contend that by no possible direction of our force, could we in the spring of 1809 have so well combined the various purposes of a continental enterprise, as by sending it to Portugal. Expeditions, more acceptable to *Austria*, might doubtless have been devised; whether any plan could have been executed with great results, is a question of much more doubt;—but immense as was the importance of the Austrian war, it was not every thing. If Austria had been more successful than she really was, her success would, perhaps, have been more *productive*, than the utmost success that could be expected in the peninsula; but it was at no period very probable that the triumph of Austria would have been so complete, as to occasion the abandonment of all the other views of Bonaparte. Yet, by any other scheme of co-operation, we must have given up, for the chance of this stupendous turn of

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* See pp. 47, 48, and the notes in 79, 80.

events, all the fruits which had been produced, to us and to our other allies, from the measures we had pursued, and, especially, all the positive advantages which we possessed in Portugal,—advantages, greatly to be encreased in importance, by an unfavourable termination of the German war. For, putting aside, (which I am by no means inclined to do) the great *and* NEW advantage of successfully resisting Bonaparte *somewhere*, putting aside, (equally in opposition to the doctrines which I inculcate) the superior benefit of a continuous policy, which rather perseveres in one line, than speculates in another,—it will be admitted that every motive of *self-preservation* which induces us to look with anxiety to a French occupation of the *coasts* and *ports* of PORTUGAL, must be heightened in proportion as France triumphs elsewhere over the demand for her troops.

On the mode and degree in which the expedition to Portugal was calculated to assist *Spain*, I have already sufficiently enlarged *.

From the nature of some of the reasons with which I have supported the measures of 1809, their validity, it will be seen, does not turn at all upon the question, of the probable duration of our success in Portugal. In no other contemplated scheme of operation was *permanency* considered; if, therefore, the occupation of Portugal was, upon other grounds, our wisest step in the general contest, as a single operation dictated by the state of the war in Germany, it was at least as likely to be permanent as any other of the projects of diversion.

I am inclined indeed to believe, that upon some or

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* See p. 110, &c.

other of the considerations which I have offered, few persons objected to the policy of reinforcing the army in Portugal in 1809, excepting those who object, permanently and generally, to all foreign operations.

Am I not then justified in this conclusion;—unless we had either refused, from the very commencement, to interfere in the peninsular war; or had declined, in 1809, to accept of the advantages afforded by the Austrian war, to our ancient policy and unvarying interests as to Portugal; or had neglected to improve that advantage by strengthening our influence among the rulers and people of the country, we must have found ourselves at the period of the peace with Austria, in the situation with respect to Portugal in which we actually stood. That is, we must have had in that country a numerous army; we must have been in a regular course of measures for forming, training, and maintaining, under our own command, a Portuguese force *; and for acquiring, or retaining, an influence in Portuguese councils.

Ought we then, when the Peace of Vienna was

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* The measure of taking a Portuguese force into British pay had been in progress from August, 1808, when the Lusitanian legion was formed under Sir *Robert Wilson* and Colonel *Mayne*; in March, 1809, General *Beresford* was sent to organize the Portuguese on a larger scale, and in the following year, a Convention was concluded with the Prince Regent, by which a force of 30,000 men were taken into our pay. [See Sir *Robert Wilson's* Preface to his Sketch of the Russian Army, p. xxi.; Capt. *Eliot*, ch. 6.; the correspondence with Mr. *Villiers*, laid before Parliament 20th Feb. 1810; and his Majesty's Message thereon, Cobb. XV. 440.] See also a recommendation of the measure of officering the Portuguese, by English, in Earl *St. Vincent's* speech, 19th Jan. 1809. [Cobb. XII. p. 8.] The utility of this force has subsequently been proved.

hastening the awful crisis, and our hope of the ultimate preservation of Portugal, partook more and more of apprehension,—to have abandoned our enterprise once for all? Ought we, just at the moment of danger, to have shrunk from a participation in the resistance, which, up to the point of danger, we had praised, encouraged, and supported?

Let not Lord GREY, turn from these considerations as "*chivalrous and romantic* *." Let him not put a stop to my enquiries by such general language as this: —"*Those heroic virtues which shed a lustre upon individual man, must in their application to the conduct of nations be chastened by reflexions of a more cautious and calculating cast* †."—I say that it is by cautious reflection, and by a calculation of future results, in opposition to what might be at the moment more dazzling, or might appear more immediately to belong to our interests, that our perseverance in Portugal is proved to be wise.

By the evacuation of Portugal, we should have entirely abandoned the footing, which by a more regular and uninterrupted system of policy than can in almost any other instance, be attributed to British diplomacy, had been obtained by Great Britain in the councils of Portugal; thus rendering it almost impossible to revert at any more favourable opportunity, to the defence of Portugal, with any hopes of advantage founded upon the co-operation of Portugal herself;—for it would be quite unreasonable to expect that we should again so recover the confidence of the Portuguese, as to provide for the security and maintenance of our army, or to obtain such a direction of their population and resources as would give us any prospect of success.

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* Speech, p. 19. † P. 18.

We should have thrown away the fairest opportunity of advantage which had offered itself to us for years, an advantage which we had been, through the whole contest, seeking in vain, but which in Portugal alone we had obtained, because in Portugal alone we had pursued, under successive administrations of the Government, one unvaried and uninterrupted policy.

But not in Portugal alone would the effects of our evacuation have been felt; in every country in which at any time hereafter we might land our troops, the recollection of our abandonment of Portugal, *without a struggle*, would have created an obstacle to our success. Whether the evacuation should be imputed to perfidy, to pusillanimity, or to a real inferiority of force, the effect would be the same in destroying all confidence in British co-operation. Nor can it be answered, that, to have been beaten out of Portugal would have been equally mischievous to our interests in that country, and elsewhere;—of *that* result, the only ill effect (at least, if "*extreme gallantry*" had, *perchance*, been displayed by our soldiers) would have been diffidence in our numbers: but on the occasions, and of such there are many, where *character* is of greater importance, the recollection of a brave, skilful, and protracted defence of Portugal, against the undiverted force of France, will always be equivalent to ten brigades!

Statesmen, therefore, who upon the termination of the German war, had looked with much more apprehension than hope, to the success of Lord Wellington's expedition, might nevertheless have objected to its recall.

The considerations, upon which I have urged the inexpediency of giving up the contest, as soon as the Austrian diversion was at an end, tend equally to up-

hold the policy of continuing it, after the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and Massena's invasion;—to the latest period, in short, in which resistance is practicable without an enormous risk.

Within what period, Lord Grey looked in June last, to the subjugation of Portugal, his speech does not explain; but its tenor rather gives it to be understood, that nothing short of ultimate and lasting success will justify, in his Lordship's mind, our exertions in her behalf: and this sentiment has been more distinctly pronounced by Lord LANSDOWNE, Lord MOIRA, and Lord GRENVILLE *.

According to this view, it would be argued, that, allowing the force of the reasons which have been offered, against an abandonment of the cause, we have ourselves, *unfortunately* at least, if not unwisely, *created* the necessity of perseverance, in a cause, which, in its progress, has become expensive, hazardous, and *fruitless*.

This I controvert; I maintain that neither was a sanguine hope essential to the *policy* of our exertions; nor ultimate success their only *acceptable fruit*.

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* In the debate of 22d Feb. 1810, [Cobbett, XVII. p. 532, 529, 511.] I do not quote particular passages. The whole of each speech ran upon the idea of the utter hopelessness of the attempt to defend Portugal, and of predictions of the speedy and disastrous return of our army!—Lord *Grenville*, on this occasion, (p. 513) made use of some of his strong language in reprobating the comparison of the case before him with that of 1806—"In the former instance, *France was fully occupied in another quarter*."—(Was she not in 1809?)—"The situation of Europe was far different then."—True—is then *Poland* more useful than *Spain*, to an army invading Portugal?—I should have given more time to an analysis of this speech, if subsequent events had not at least *suspended* its operation. It is daily becoming a better and better illustration of the *impolicy* of uttering *prophecies*, when a short-hand writer happens to be near.

Upon several grounds, independent of character and good faith, we ought to keep Portugal as long as we can, even though we have no great expectation of saving her at last. My first ground, I know very well, will be referred to a *short-sighted policy*; it will be said to illustrate the distinction between *true statesmen*, and ministers of *expedient*. But I must nevertheless retain the conviction of the occasional expediency of trusting a little to the *Chapter of Accidents*. Admitting that success in Portugal was more than doubtful, it was at any time to be forwarded by any one of various events, not one of which we could expect with confidence, and not one of which we could pronounce improbable. The *unexpected* revolution in Spain, saved Portugal in 1808; the *unexpected* war in Austria, according to the French themselves, saved Portugal in 1809. It would not therefore have been absurd, in June 1810, to look to the possibility of some other *lucky accident*, which should still save Portugal.

Upon these considerations then, it appears to me, that even granting, that without the ultimate establishment of the independence of Portugal, all our efforts will have been useless sacrifices, and granting, that all our efforts are not likely to accomplish that great end, we may yet justifiably persevere, as long as we can, in the hope of attaining it through extraneous and unexpected means.

But, far from resting upon this questionable ground, I ask whether every principle, which renders it desirable finally to expel the French from Portugal, does not make it also desirable to keep them out as long as we can?

That the temporary occupation of a fort, or tract of country, obtained only because an enemy has greater matters on his hands at the time, is often a

weak policy, and one which has, not without reason, been objected to the enemies of Bonaparte, I am well disposed to admit. But the observation is not applicable to the defence of Portugal; it would not be applicable, even if it *were* by other and greater objects, that our enemy was prevented from expelling us, inasmuch as the occupation of the country, and the connection with its rulers and people, is, as long as it lasts, and the more for lasting the longer, a substantive political advantage, nearly affecting our own, British, defensive, interests. But, still less is the observation applicable, when the country of which the occupation is disputed, is the principal theatre of war;—the quarter, in which "*the great battle is to* "*be fought* *," between England and her allies on the one side, and Bonaparte on the other.

Do we persuade ourselves, that our anxiety for the preservation of Portugal, has been dictated by "*a* "*generous magnanimity* †?"—Do we fancy, that "*a high-minded disinterestedness* ‡" alone, has created in every British Cabinet in which Portuguese affairs have been discussed, the desire to preserve from French dominion, the resources, coasts, and ports of Portugal?—We deceive ourselves grossly. Yielding to no people upon earth in "national vir-"tue," we must however trace our interest in Portugal to less heroic motives. Our own safety requires the neutrality, if not the possession of Portugal. We are well aware that "LISBON and OPORTO are two of the most important ports, for us, upon the whole coast of the Continent of Europe?" We are not ignorant of the tremendous peril in which *Ire-*

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* See the Edinburgh Review, No. 25. p. 231.

† Lord Grey's Speech, p. 18. ‡ P. 19.

land will be placed, if Bonaparte should ultimately succeed in obtaining possession of the Southern Peninsula*.

But putting aside every consideration which gives us a peculiar interest in Portugal, we have other motives, sufficiently strong, for persevering in her defence. Whatever it is the object of France to accomplish, it is ours to prevent. Not merely because we are at war, but because it is by opposition alone, that we can accomplish any of the purposes of war. Whether we look to the possibility of a peace, or to the continuance of the war till England shall have been destroyed, or France humbled, our policy must be the same.

Whenever we negociate for peace, the fate of the Continental Powers, will, in all probability, be decided by their actual state. If France should have obtained the dominion, for instance, of *Sicily*, or of *Portugal*, we could not hope to restore their independence by treaty; none but the greatest sacrifices, and possibly not the greatest which we could make, would induce France to relinquish her conquests. But if we nego-

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* "It is now equally needless to aggravate, and impossible to disprove the tremendous peril in which Ireland will be placed, if Bonaparte should ultimately succeed in obtaining possession of the Spanish Peninsula. Such is the course which vessels from that part of the world would have to steer to the shores of Ireland, that the very winds which would best serve for their passage, would blow all our fleets from any station where they would be intercepted. And those winds are of such regular occurrence, that one of the highest naval authorities of this kingdom has been repeatedly heard to say, that during a particular period of the year, if he was to carry on a French trade from *Lisbon* to *Bantry*, he would be so little afraid of British cruizers, that he would not lay out one half per cent. in insuring against that hazard. *It is not easy then to overrate the evils of that policy which tends to encrease the hazards of such an invasion.*"—Edinburgh Review, o. 33. p. 3.

ciate while the fate of a portion of Europe still remains undecided, we negociate, as to that unsubjugated portion, upon equal terms.

And how is it, if we expect nothing but war? —If we are convinced, that "*Universal Dominion*" is the hope of NAPOLEON, and that "he looks to the "*overthrow and destruction of* GREAT BRITAIN as "his fixed, his most desirable object, as that in "which all his passions are concentrated, and *to* "*which all his designs are directed* *."

If this be so, if the subjugation of all the other states of Europe, is but accessary, in the mind of our enemy, to his final purpose of destroying Britain, it is most assuredly our policy to impede him, to the very utmost of our strength, in his preparatory measures; to thwart his designs before they approach consummation; to prevent him from acquiring, by the subjugation of other states, that "accession of power and resources," by which alone he hopes to overcome the natural strength of Britain; and thus to postpone, if not to avert, that anxious day, in which the fate of Britain shall be decided upon British ground.

Although, therefore, we suppress, as too heroical for a nation, every obtruding sentiment of compassion; although we respect, as "chivalrous and romantic," every principle of honour, and every dictate of friendship, which might interest us in the fate of Portugal, there is yet one feeling, perhaps the strongest of all, which we may, as a people, borrow from "individual man."—If the sympathy of

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* Lord Grey's Speech, p. 11.

benevolence has no influence over our minds, the sympathy of mutual interest must produce the same effect. Although the one might not restrain us from witnessing, unmoved, *Lisbon* delivered up to the ravages of a second *Junot*;—the other would give us a foretaste of the sensations which we should experience, if, from Lisbon, with strength and hopes augmented, the ravagers should proceed to *Cork*, *Dublin*, or LONDON.

But there is yet another way of considering the effect of our warlike efforts,—which is perhaps more consonant to the views of Lord Grey.

It may be said, that our utmost efforts cannot avert the great and decisive struggle for independence, to which the ambition of our enemy will ultimately bring us; and that by the quiet, provident, defensive, "husbanding system," we shall reserve and encrease the strength with which we are to meet that "formidable danger."

In opposing this view, I must, in the first place, deny that it is at all clear, that the time will come, when there will be a greater and more immediate demand for our exertions, than at present exists. It is at least extremely doubtful, whether our contest with France will ever take a turn, in which our interest, and security, will be more immediately threatened, than they are at this moment. We may therefore be reserving ourselves for a danger which will not arrive,—thus needlessly sacrificing advantages which we actually possess, and withholding from others the benefit of the strength, which we shall never have occasion to use for ourselves.

But, granting that we are to expect an attack, direct, vigorous, and undivided, from Bonaparte, with all the resources of France at his disposal, and not

only of France, but of all the Powers of Europe, whom by the continued and successful progress of his ambitious exertions, he may reduce to obedience, and enlist under his usurping banners;—granting, that there remains not one point in calculation, nor one turn of chance, which would justify us in retaining a ray of hope, of the preservation of a single state of Europe; granting, that it would be foolish and absurd to expect that any one of the devoted countries, whose population and fleets, and treasures, are appropriated, in the imagination of our enemy, to the destruction of Britain, should either by wisdom or fortune, or powerful assistance, be excepted from the general conquest;—I say that it is not by the measures recommended by Lord Grey, it is not by what *he* styles a "provident system," that we shall truly husband the resources by which we are to repel the terrific assault.

If money alone were wanting, if our security were to be purchased for a price, it might be argued, at least with plausibility, that by carefully hoarding our treasures now, we should render them hereafter more competent to our deliverance; but if a regular army, experienced commanders, and a martial spirit, are essential to the preservation of our independence, it is not by a defensive system,—by a conduct of the war approaching to peace*, that we shall husband these our most valuable resources against the time of need.

Neither authorities nor examples are wanting, to establish the general principles, on which I object to a system purely defensive.

I am not aware of any one writer on political eco-

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* See p. 40.

nomy, who has not laid it down, that *A Nation cannot be stationary*;—that in Military Strength, as in Population, in Science,—perhaps in the Fine Arts, —we must either go backwards or forwards: that if we do not improve, we must inevitably degenerate.

Whether these positions be sound or not, in the extent in which they are held by philosophers, I may assume, upon the grounds of common sense, or of the observation and reflection of every man, that a defensive war, or, (for such is the sense in which we now use it) a *war without military operations*, is not the system under which our armies can be encreased or improved: I conceive it to be scarcely less incontrovertible, that we cannot, by pure defence, even preserve our strength, unimpaired, as we now possess it. Were not the contrary opinion apparently countenanced by Lord Grey, I should say with the confidence of universal assent, (as I do say with the confidence of self-conviction,) that without *active* war in the interval, our armies would, ten years hence, be essentially and dangerously deteriorated; that so far from having husbanded our resources, we should have been gradually and fatally wasting them.

But it may be said that it is not to any one great, warlike, effort, that we are to look as the consummation of the hostility of France towards England, —and that I have myself assumed it to be probable that no such attempt will be made by Bonaparte*;— but that we are rather to expect and provide against a system, on the part of our enemy, of *protracted* warfare, productive of no military danger, but more immediately directed against our financial prosperity, and the sources of that national wealth, which now enables us to sustain the contest, but

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* See p. 156.

which, if not carefully economized, will fail us before it is brought to a conclusion. An exertion, it may be held, such as that which we are now sustaining in Portugal, exceeds the limit of our strength, and must therefore weigh us down at last, or create a necessity for an inglorious and dangerous termination of the War.

Upon so much of this consideration, as rests upon the incompetency of our *finances*, I have little to add *; but I must observe, that the principle which opposes a stationary warlike force, is equally adverse to a stationary finance; and that as a more practical consideration applying to the peculiar constitution and character of this country, it might not unreasonably be urged, that to raise, year after year, the necessary supplies for a war of pure defence, would be a work of peculiar embarrassment;—that nothing would be more difficult than to reconcile this restless and impatient people to exertions, in which neither glory could be acquired, nor any evident and striking peril averted.

But granting that it is through our Finance, that Ruin is to reach us, is it to be averted by a defensive system?—Shall we be saved from it by the abandonment of Portugal?

We are to be afraid, it seems, not of the violence of the hostilities opposed to us, but of their duration; it is assumed, that peace with France, during the life-time of Bonaparte is quite impracticable; that, therefore, as no success which we can reasonably expect will bring the war to a termination, all our measures ought to be dictated by the principle of making our war of defence as cheap as we can.

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* See Sect. III.

Now, not disputing here the correctness of the assumption, which makes war co-existent with Bonaparte, I may observe that it rests upon several other assumptions, which, though possibly very rational, are certainly speculative, and dependent upon many contingencies. It is not only assumed, that Great Britain is, at this moment, the ultimate object to which the greedy ambition of Bonaparte is directed; but that it is an object from which nothing can divert him, and for which nothing can compensate him: that he is swayed rather by Passion, than Policy; and that no considerations of expediency or interest, can at any future time, or under circumstances however varied, induce him to abandon or compromise his immutable resolve.

It must be assumed, that HE, in whose politics it was long a prominent feature and a boast, never to have attempted any thing in vain;—who astonished the world more by a single instance of erroneous judgment, than by the repeated verifications of his estimates of success,—has excepted Great Britain from the general and wise rule of his policy, and has vowed unremittingly to pursue her, at whatever expence, whatever risk, and with whatever chance of success.

It must be assumed, that the Politician, who has, more often and more rapidly than any other of equal eminence, varied his relations with Princes and States, whose alliances have, less than that of any Prince in modern history, appeared to depend upon ancient connections or national aversions,—has eternally forsworn the friendship of England alone.

Without all these *assumptions*, it is evident, we ought not to satisfy ourselves that the *duration* of the war is not to be shortened by any exertion of our own; they ought, as I conceive, to be esta-

blished as *facts*, before they justify us in acting upon a system of diffidence and despondency, and in abstaining from measures of evident expediency, lest they should encrease the burthen of the war which they can never bring to a conclusion.

For, unless, by admitting all that has been assumed, we pronounced our enemy to be differently constituted from all other men, it would be our natural policy, (as we certainly cannot subdue him) to demonstrate to him the impolicy of his enmity;—to convince him that it is in our power to make it inconvenient to him;—to shew, not merely that we are prepared for his attack, whenever it may happen to accord with his plans, but that we are, in the mean time, formidable and active enemies;—and, thus, to render him anxious for peace.

The utmost that we can do in respect of *Commerce*, is little more than defensive; our enemy takes care that his *Navy* shall not feel our power;—how then can we act so wisely, towards shortening the duration of the War, as by opposing him in his schemes of Continental Aggrandizement;—by teaching him that this despised "*Nation of Shopkeepers*," —this England, which *gives him cause to rejoice whenever she sets her foot on the Continent* *, can turn against him the fortune of a war by land; can give him more trouble, in the subjugation of one of the smallest kingdoms of Europe, than he has experienced in the overthrow and humiliation of the proudest monarchies!

These considerations convince me, that an obstinate perseverance in the defence of Portugal ought,

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* Moniteur.

even to those who look with the greatest apprehension to the *duration* of the War, to recommend itself as the most safe and provident line of policy.

I have now considered, in every point of view which was suggested, either by the general observations of Lord Grey, or by the events upon which they were founded, the policy of assisting in the defence of Portugal. If any one of the inducements which I have assigned for perseverance should appear insufficient, and, particularly, if the reasoning grounded upon the nature of the War with France, should be thought inconclusive, it must be borne in mind that it is not upon any one single motive, and still less upon the general expediency of opposing France, that the wisdom of the measure rests. The inducements arising out of the state of our relations with Portugal, and the situation of Spain, are amply sufficient in justification of the measures adopted, and it is enough, if I have succeeded in proving that the *husbanding* principle which Lord Grey has endeavoured to establish, ought not to supersede every one of the considerations which have dictated our policy in Portugal. But inasmuch as the force of some of these considerations, depends, partly, upon the probable length of time during which we may retain our footing in the country, the question would be incompletely discussed, without a recapitulation of events subsequent to Lord Grey's Speech.

His Lordship, it has already been observed, hazarded no speculation upon this point, but his friends and former Colleagues, had insisted, from the commencement of the campaign, upon the *utter hopelessness* * of our attempt; Lord Grenville had stated

* See p. 151.

the question of the continuance or recall of our army, to be "*neither more nor less than whether or not the army should be* SACRIFICED." And Lord MOIRA, the highest military authority in the Cabinet of 1806, had pronounced the plan of defence to be "*utterly impracticable.*"

These opinions were at least justified by the confident expectations of BONAPARTE *.

And where is now the British Army?—Has Lord WELLINGTON been driven into the *Tagus*?—Are the Imperial Eagles to be seen on the fortresses of *Lisbon*?—Has a period been put to the War in the Peninsula?—Has FRANCE, or has ENGLAND, been successful in PORTUGAL?

The facts, necessary for answering these enquiries, may be very briefly related.

I need not revert to the fearful suspense that prevailed at the moment in which the myriads of Bonaparte, victorious on the *Danube*, unresisted on the *Ebro*, were about to consummate their glory on the *Tagus*. The plan of the campaign was simple;—"*the destruction of the* BRITISH ARMY, *and the Capture of* LISBON;" points of minor importance were to follow as of course, and the subjugation of Portugal would thus be accomplished, and the War concluded. What it was MASSENA's duty to perform; it was Lord WELLINGTON's to prevent.

The French Marshal proceeded regularly; the fall of *Ciudad Rodrigo* and *Almeida* enabled him to pass

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* See p. 143.

the frontier *. The British Army retired; and the diffident now began actually to despair.

Bonaparte had by this time become impatient; he signified it as his imperial INTENTION that Massena should "attack and overthrow the English Army." It was *ridiculous*, thought Napoleon †, that the English should keep his armies in check. Still, however, Lord *Wellington* was between Massena and *Lisbon*; he was in vain attacked at *Busaco*; the battle served only to display his own skill, the bravery of his troops, and the efficiency of the Portuguese levies ‡. But with a view to the security of Lisbon, he retired, in October §, to the position which he had long before selected and improved, as one by

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* The French took up their ground before *Ciudad Rodrigo* on the 26th of April; invested it completely on the 11th of June; and opened their fire upon it on the 24th. It surrendered by capitulation on the 10th of July. For this, and some preceding skirmishes between the French and English, see Lord *Wellington's* dispatches from *Viseu*, 28th March, and from *Alverca*, 11th July, 1810 [Gazettes, 14th April, and 31st July.] And *Massena's* report to *Berthier*, [SUN, 6th August.]—*Almeida* surrendered on the 27th of August, after a siege of short duration, and other circumstances giving rise to a strong suspicion of treachery. See Lord *Wellington's* dispatches from *Alverca*, 25th July; and *Gouvea*, 5th Sept. [Gazettes, 11th Aug. and 6th Oct.]—For the French account of the proceedings immediately subsequent to the fall of Almeida, see the Moniteur of 29th Nov. [Cobb. XVIII. 1141.]

† Letter from *Berthier* to *Massena*, Paris, 19th September, 1810. [SUN, 20th Nov.]

‡ Lord *Wellington's* dispatch, Coimbra, 30th Sept. [Gazette, 15th Oct.] Massena's report from Coimbra. [SUN, 26th Nov.]

§ Official Bulletin, London, [SUN, 20th Oct.] See Lord Wellington's subsequent dispatches from this position, viz. Pero Negro, 20th and 27th Oct. 3d and 10th Nov. [Gazettes, 30th and 24th Nov.]

which the capital might be preserved *. He was closely followed by the enemy; Massena,—moving

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* Being confident that military opinions are very nearly unanimous in favour of Lord WELLINGTON'S conduct of this campaign, and not knowing whether his political enemies will adopt any contrary sentiment, I have given very little detail. The following summary is extracted from "*A Slight Sketch of the Campaign in Portugal*:"—

"Its commencement may be dated from the movement of the French army to invest Ciudad Rodrigo. The force which was assembled for that purpose, consisted of the two corps of Ney and Junot, while that under Regnier moved from the neighbourhood of Badajos, to the right bank of the Tagus, where it threatened the frontier of Portugal, along the course of that river, and communicated with the main body under Massena, through the mountains to the northward of the Vale of Placentia.

"In order to oppose this plan of attack, Lord Wellington assembled the main body of the allied army in the neighbourhood of Almeida, and directed General Hill, who watched the motions of Regnier from the vicinity of Elvas, to make a movement to the right bank of the Tagus, and to cover the road to Lisbon by Castello Branco, which was threatened by the corps of Regnier: and a reserve was assembled at Thomar under General Leith. Thus, while the ground taken up by Lord Wellington himself was so strong as to be secure from any direct attack, and General Hill was enabled from his position at Elvas to anticipate any movement which Regnier might make with a view to turn Lord Wellington's right; which accordingly we find that he actually did; and the moment that the French general entered into direct cooperation with Massena by moving to the right of the Tagus, General Hill, by a corresponding movement, placed himself upon Lord Wellington's right, and thus secured that important point. The position occupied by General Leith at Thomar, enabled him to move either on his left, to the Mondego, to support Lord Wellington, if he retired along the valley of that river; to his front to support General Hill; or on his right to maintain the line of the Tagus."—

"After the fall of Almeida, the French army began to be more decided in its measures, and Lord Wellington soon ascertained that their object was to turn his left, and that in order to support this operation, the corps of Regnier had moved by its right to the northward, and advanced towards the position occupied by the corps under the immediate command of his Lordship, whilst the remaining divisions of the French army also moved still further

so rapidly that his sick and wounded fell into the hands of the Portuguese *, advanced towards the

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to their right; Lord Wellington immediately saw the expediency of retiring; and moving himself along the valley of the Mondego, he directed Generals Hill and Leith to move by their left and to join him on the Alva at the position of Ponte de Marcella. It is generally understood that at this point he determined to make a stand; and the position was one of such strength (which will be obvious on mere inspection of the map) as to give him every reason to hope for a favourable issue, in case it were attacked. The enemy, however, instead of following the British army along the left bank of the Mondego, crossed over, in preference to the course that would have led him to an attack upon the British, to the right, and took the road to Viseu, which is the very worst road in Portugal, and materially impeded the course of their operations. Their object was to avoid, and by avoiding to turn, without risking an engagement, the position of the Ponte de Marcella, by marching upon Coimbra; by this movement they threatened Lord Wellington's rear on the one hand, and Oporto on the other. But his Lordship penetrating their design, made a rapid and brilliant movement by his left, and placed himself in the powerful position of Busaco, where I believe the enemy never expected to find him, and where, perhaps from ignorance as to the extent of force which had been moved to this point, they made a most rash and fruitless attempt to carry his position.

"The enemy, however, having succeeded in turning Lord Wellington's flank by a movement which the intended occupation of Sardao, if it could have been effected in time, might have prevented, or at least considerably delayed, rendered the position of Busaco no longer tenable, and Lord Wellington retired behind the Mondego, upon the reinforcements which were marching to join him from Lisbon. This river, notwithstanding the assertions in the Moniteur of the 'superb positions of the Mondego,' affords, as is well known, no position which, considered with a reference to the defence of Lisbon, may not be turned; and consequently, when the enemy evinced an intention of advancing, his Lordship, in pursuance of his previous resolution, determined to retire before him, and not to attempt to make any serious stand till he had reached those positions nearer to Lisbon, which he had before examined, and had caused to be fortified with great care, and which he conceived to be of such natural and artificial strength, as to justify his determination there to await the collected effort of the enemy, and to contend for the ultimate deliverance of Portugal."

* Gazette, 20th Nov.

capital. The decisive moment seemed, at last, really to approach.

MASSENA already imagined himself at Lisbon; he assured his impatient master that *every thing led him to hope* for * that final accomplishment of his purpose.

Yet, after remaining for a month, without any attempt at an *overthrow of the English*, the French Marshal retired, with a precipitation which occasioned the loss of 400 men, to a new position, more remote from LISBON †. And in that position he now remains, closely watched by Lord WELLINGTON, who, while he preserves his communication with the strong position covering Lisbon, is ready to take advantage of any opportunity of more active success, that may be afforded him by the movements of his enemy ‡.

With the exception of *Almeida*, and the tract of country which is actually occupied or commanded by his troops, not a single point in Portugal is possessed by Massena. *Elvas*, OPORTO, LISBON; the *Douro*, the *Tagus* as far as it is navigable;—the two provinces north of the Douro, the two provinces

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* Paper found upon the Aid-de-Camp taken in disguise. [SUN, 26th Nov.]—And see *Massena*'s letter from *Alenquer*, 3d Nov. [SUN, 30th Nov.]

† Lord *Wellington*'s letter from *Cartaxo*, 21st Nov. [Gazette, 3d Dec.]

‡ Letters from *Cartaxo*, 8th, 15th, 22d, and 29th Dec. 1810. [Gazettes, 25th Dec. 1810; 1st and 15th Jan. 1811.]—General Hill has again been detached, south of the Tagus, with a view to any movement which might be made towards the *Alentejo*; and new works have been constructed, from *Aldea Gallega* to *Setuval*, by which the shipping in the *Tagus* would be secured, in case of the enemy's being in force on the left bank.

south of the Tagus; the greater part of *Estremadura* and *Beira*, the whole *Coast* of PORTUGAL,—are entirely free from the Power or Influence of France. In the districts of which her armies have obtained the possession, they have found little but an unsubdued spirit of resistance to France, and encreasing confidence in England, and her General.

Such are the undisputed * facts and results of the campaign of 1810. I do not wish to build upon these events, any extravagant exultation, or any very sanguine hope. But I venture to ask Lord Grey, with perfect confidence, whether, if there has been *a failure in Portugal,* it has been the failure of an *English* Expedition?—Whether, if *disgrace* is imputable to either of the contending Powers, it does not rather belong to MASSENA, than to Lord WELLINGTON?

It is undoubtedly true that the French Marshal was instructed *to drive the English out of Portugal*; that it was considered, when his army was much weaker than at present, that his force was perfectly competent to his object; that he has nevertheless hitherto *failed in its accomplishment*.

The failure of France is our success.

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* It may be said that some objections have been taken to an expression in one of Lord Wellington's dispatches;—" the enemy possesses only the ground on which he stands." An army, powerful as Massena's, can of course extend its communications from time to time, for procuring supplies, or other purposes; but it is an *undisputed fact*, that no part of Portugal is subject to French influence or controul, which is not actually held by military force, that the country so held is contracted, as I have stated in the text, and that any attempt at an extension is rendered exceedingly difficult and dangerous, by the hostility of the natives, and the activity of the irregular troops, as well as by the presence of the British Army.

To whatever cause this success is ascribed, the result is gratifying, and assuredly much more favourable to my view than to that of Lord Grey.

Whether all the means of France are insufficient for the conquest of Portugal: whether Bonaparte has *repeatedly* miscalculated the means required; whether his Commanders have been ill-selected; whether his troops are bad; whether their maintenance has been unexpectedly difficult; whether the Portuguese themselves have opposed an unforeseen resistance *; whether the state of Spain has furnished an unexpected obstacle; or whether *a combination* of some or all of these circumstances has occasioned the disappointment of France, the conclusion is the same. All the assigned causes, with the exception only of the erroneous estimates of Bonaparte, must acquire

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* It will not, I apprehend, be denied, that from the commencement of her resistance, Portugal has constantly improved in every thing which can give to that resistance a chance of success. From June, 1808, when *Oporto*, and the provinces of *Alentejo* and *Algarve* rose simultaneously against the French, [Edinburgh Ann. Reg. 1808, ch. 16.—Gazette, 12th July, 1808,] the Portuguese have been faithful to their own cause; and, in spite of the *Convention of Cintra*, have pursued the best means of supporting it, in putting their trust in England; by giving to her General and her Ambassador an influence in their Government; by placing both troops and *ships* [8th Aug. 1810,] under the command of her officers; and, generally, listening to her advice on every point. By the conduct of the regular Portuguese troops at *Busaco*, and of the Militia and *Ordenanza* under General *Silveira*, Colonels *Trant*, *Miller*, and *Wilson*, (for which see all our late Gazettes) it has been shewn, as well that the natives of Portugal are capable of being brought to a state of considerable efficiency in the field, as that they understand the mode of harassing an invading enemy in his marches and detachments.—In mentioning the Portuguese troops, however, I must add that it is probably a very erroneous opinion, that the Portuguese troops, with their small proportion of British officers, are in all circumstances and situations to be reckoned with British or French troops by their numbers.

strength in the lapse of time; and all the causes, without exception, militate against the doctrines of despondency: they all tend to dispel that mischievous and cowardly delusion, under which too many of our Politicians have fancied, that France must always beat us by land.

But for my present purpose it is sufficient,—and may, I trust, be assumed without argument,—that the events of 1810, to whatever causes they be assigned, tend rather to corroborate than to weaken the opinions which have been advanced, of the practicability and expediency of opposing France in Portugal *.

I now revert to SPAIN †.

Since the termination of the limited co-operation

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* According to MASSENA, [Report from *Coimbra*, SUN, 26th Nov. 1810,] nothing but a battle can destroy Lord Wellington, or force him to reimbark. Lord Wellington himself apparently coincides in this opinion, and will not fight a battle except under circumstances of great advantage.

† It may have been observed that I have said nothing upon the state of *Spanish or Portuguese America*. The omission has by no means arisen from a low estimation of the importance of the events which have occurred, and which are now passing, in those countries. But as these events could not be related or elucidated without much detail, and have apparently formed no part of Lord *Grey's* consideration, I trust that I may be excused for abstaining from the discussion. With respect, however, to our relations with *Portugal*, including her Transatlantic dependencies, it may be right to refer to the Treaties of Friendship and Alliance, and of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, signed at *Rio de Janeiro*, the 19th Feb. 1810; [Cobb. Pol. Reg. XVIII. 412 and 246.] and with respect to the line adopted in regard to the *Spanish* Colonies, to the instruction from Lord *Liverpool* to Brigadier-General *Layard*, 29th June, 1810. [*ib.* 382.]—It surely cannot be doubted, that the measures which we have pursued in respect to Spain and Portugal, but more particularly the latter, tend very much to forward our interests in South America.

of Lord WELLINGTON with the Spanish Generals, there had been no British force in Spain, except that which was furnished towards the defence of *Cadiz* in the spring of last year *.

I am not aware that any objection has been urged to this measure,—by which we have assisted in preserving, from the power of France, one of the strongest fortresses, and finest harbours of Spain †, as well as a considerable division of the Spanish Navy.—It is hardly necessary to observe, that from the situation of our land and sea forces, the heaviest misfortune that can befal us at Cadiz, is the return of our Expedition, after an unsuccessful attempt at defending the town. Should such ultimately be the event, I trust that not even Lord Grey would complain of Disaster, or Disgrace.

The small force of General GRAHAM ‡, while it contributes materially to the interests as well of

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* No documents have been made public, which enable me to state the particulars of the acceptance of his Majesty's offers in regard to Cadiz. [See the references in pp. 108 and 141.]

† Lord *Holland*, in the debate of 8th June, 1810, mentioned *Cadiz*, with *Lisbon*, as one of the ports which facilitated the invasion of Ireland, and which it was therefore of importance to preserve from the dominion of the enemy. [Cobb. XVII. 502-3.]

‡ A part of the force originally destined for the defence of Cadiz, was withdrawn for the purpose of strengthening Lord *Wellington*.—Of the progress of the Siege, few details have been published; *Soult*, who commands, has not, as is believed, received any reinforcements, and the strength of his army must therefore diminish; but in the construction of works, and every kind of artificial strength, no pains have been spared.—The latest French report of the state of the siege, is in the "Intelligence from the Armies in Spain," dated *Paris*, 19 Jan. 1811. [SUN, 28th Jan.] Our Gazettes have given no intelligence of the state of affairs at *Cadiz* since the evacuation of Fort *Matagorda*, 23d April 1810. [Gazette, 12 May, 1810.]

Great Britain as of Spain, by the protection which it helps to afford to Cadiz, and to the *Regency* and *Cortes* of the kingdom, assembled in the *Isla de Leon*, serves to keep alive in Spain, a due sense of the value of the British alliance *.

For the purposes of this Enquiry, namely, an appreciation of the wisdom and success of our late military enterprises, these observations are sufficient. The British Ministers are responsible only for their own measures. The preservation of Spain is an object which England has had much at heart, and towards which she has contributed much; but she has never pretended to furnish, as in Portugal, the great and indispensable means of defence; her exertions have necessarily borne a small proportion to the aggregate resistance; she might have done a little more or a little less, but she could not possibly, as in Portugal, *make the whole difference of the salvation of the country*: if Spain should ultimately succeed,

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* In mentioning the *Regency* and the *Cortes*, it may be proper to refer to the steps taken by the British Government, for promoting the establishment of a general and efficient government in Spain, and the convocation of the Cortes. See the correspondence between Mr. Secretary *Canning*, and Mr. *Stuart*, Mr. *Frere*, and Lord *Wellesley*, in 1808 and 1809. [Papers, 1810, E. and N.] For the progress and state of our public relations with Spain, see the Speeches from the Throne, 4 July 1808; 19th Jan. and 21st June 1809. Treaty of Peace, &c. 14th Jan. 1809. [Cobb. XIII. 809.] Speeches, 23d Jan. and 21st June, 1810. The language of the last is as follows;—" *Portugal*, rescued from the oppression of the enemy, by the powerful assistance of His Majesty's arms, has exerted herself with vigour and energy in making every preparation for repelling, with the continued aid of His Majesty's Forces, any renewed attack on the part of the enemy; and in *Spain*, notwithstanding the reverses which have been experienced, the spirit of resistance against France still continues unsubdued and unabated: And His Majesty commands us to assure you of his firm and unaltered conviction, that not only the honour of his Throne, but the best interests of his dominions, require his most strenuous and persevering assistance to the glorious efforts of those loyal nations."

England will probably have accelerated or completed her success; yet, if Spain should fall, the failure can never be ascribed to England.

On the probability, now remaining, of success in Spain, I therefore say little. I am much afraid, that the state of Spain is daily approaching nearer and nearer * to that which must end in her being "laid waste, depopulated, and conquered †;" but I trust and believe that there are yet many stages in the progress of conquest before we come to the point at which no change of circumstances can give to Spain a new hope of success; and still more, before our

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* Yet France proceeds very slowly. The periodical reports sent to *Paris*, from the several provinces in Spain, at least prove, that in few or none of the provinces, the spirit of resistance is extinct, or has even ceased to be active. In the very provinces of *Madrid* and *Toledo*, it is only said that "*order and tranquillity prevail more and more.*" GALICIA continues free, and is therefore not mentioned; the *Asturias* is said to be *occupied* by General *Bonnet* In the North-Eastern provinces there has been an interval of twelvemonths between the taking of *Gerona* by *Augereau* [10 Dec. 1809. SUN, 1 Jan. 18 0,] and that of *Tortosa* by *Suchet*, [1 Jan. 1811.] These few circumstances, taken from the last French report [SUN, 28th Jan. 1811], the notorious difficulty with which *Massena* communicates with France, and the continued existence of General *O'Donnell*, certainly shew that much yet remains to be done by France in Spain.

† *Pasley*. [p. 241.] On this subject, as well as on the policy which we ought to pursue in Spain, I adopt, with very little difference or qualification, the views of Capt. Pasley. [P. 195 to 212; and 232 to the end of the chapter.] It is, however, remarkable, that the language of France in regard to Spain, and much more in regard to Portugal, has been gradually lowered. The last French Exposé [Cobb. XIX 55.] is *silent*, nor has any *Moniteur* since the 24th July, [SUN, 2d Aug.] spoken with any degree of triumph, of the proceedings of the Army of Portugal. Yet in the *March preceding*, the whole blame of the failure had been thrown upon the Commanders:—"Had the war in Spain "been *differently managed*, SPAIN would *long since* have been "reduced to submission, and Lord WELLINGTON *would long* "*since have been driven into the sea.*" [*Moniteur*, cited in. p. 142. note ‡.]

defence of Portugal becomes utterly impracticable and hopeless. Even after *this* stage, there must be a considerable interval, before the conquest of the Peninsula can be made directly applicable to our destruction.

I have now completed the Narrative of the Military Operations of the last five years, except those of the Army in the *Mediterranean*. In *Sicily*, the sole portion of his dominions remaining to our old ally the King of Naples, a considerable force had been stationed, under the administration of Mr. PITT, with the view not so much of defending the island, as of being prepared for any opening, which the Coalition then in preparation might afford in Italy, or the maritime dominions of Austria. A considerable part of this force remained in Sicily during the existence of the administration of Lord *Grenville*, and was employed, as we have seen *, in *Calabria* and in *Egypt*.

A considerable part of this force had been withdrawn in 1807 †; but it having been formally stipulated in 1808 ‡, that Sicily should be defended,

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* Pp. 52 and 53.—The Island of *Capri*, which had been taken in 1806 by a naval force, and subsequently garrisoned from Sicily, surrendered by capitulation to the French, on the 16th of October, 1808.—See Sir *J. Stuart's* letter to Lord Castlereagh, 31st Oct. 1808. [Presented to the House of Commons 29th March, 1809.]

† See p. 74.

‡ Treaty between his Majesty and the King of the Two Sicilies, 30th March, 1808. [Cobb. Debates, XI. 845.] Although it was not till this period that the Treaty was signed, it had been in progress during the preceding Administration;—it was thought, by all parties, that as the King of Naples had been drawn into the War with France in 1805, (which cost him his Continental dominions) by Russia, then the intimate ally of Great Britain, we were bound to assist him in his defence of Sicily. See the Debates of 13th June, 1808, and particularly the speeches of

and that for that purpose 10,000 men, at the *least*, should be maintained in the island, a force, including foreign troops, rather exceeding that number, still remained in the island in 1809.

In June of that year, Sir JOHN STUART, the Commander of the forces, in pursuance, as I apprehend *, of very general instructions from his Government, and with a view of operating a diversion in favour of Austria, projected a descent upon Naples. His success, however, was limited to the temporary occupation of *Ischia* and *Procida* †, the consequent recall of a body of the enemy's troops, which had marched from Naples to the north of Italy.

It is obvious that the Ministers have no responsibility on account of these proceedings, beyond that of retaining the force in Sicily, and giving to the Commander the general instruction to employ them, as he saw occasion, for the advantage of our Ally.

Subsequent events have unquestionably tended to lessen the probability of the *loss of* SICILY ‡.

Mr *Canning* and Lord *Henry Petty*. [Cobb. XI. 861-2.] Thus much is necessary in elucidation of our military measures; the other points of the policy pursued towards Sicily form another topic of Lord Grey's Speech.

* There are no public documents on this subject. I rather believe, that, in point of fact, Sir J. Stuart had not, at the period of his undertaking, received any fresh instructions whatever.

† Gazettes of 5th and 9th Sept. 1809. An ineffectual attempt was made on *Scylla*.

‡ See Lord Grey's Speech, p. 24; Sir *J. Stuart's* account of the repulse of the enemy on the 8th of September, 1810; [Gazette, 20th Nov.] General *Grenier's* Report, [Cobb. XVIII. 826.] and King *Joachim's* General Orders of 26th Sept. *postponing* the Invasion. [*Ib* 767.]

Our success in the GREEK ISLANDS has been necessarily limited by the more pressing demand for our forces in other quarters; but it may reasonably be hoped, that should the relative importance of these islands be encreased, the progress of our land and sea forces *, in that part of the world, will facilitate any further measures which, in such case, may be politic.

Such, then, is the History of the Military Operations of the successors of Lord GREY; such the nature and effects of the system, which has superseded the safe policy of the Cabinet of 1806.

Upon a comparison of the "expediency, conduct, "and result †," of the enterprises undertaken by the two Governments, I ask, with confidence, for a decision. The comparison has been studiously avoided by the Ministers of 1806: from their language it would be gathered, not only that THEY sent no Expeditions to disaster and disgrace,—that THEY never dreamt of defending a kingdom against BONAPARTE, of dismembering the Spanish Monarchy, or of intimidating the *Turks*; but that they had no Expeditions at all; and that their policy towards *Russia* and *Sweden* was their policy towards the world:—that they looked on, with a manly and complacent dignity, while their Allies were beaten and

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* *Zante, Cephalonia, Ithaca,* and *Cerigo*, were taken possession of in October, 1809, by Brigadier-General *Oswald* and Captain *Spranger*, in pursuance of orders from Sir *John Stuart* and Lord *Collingwood*. [Gazettes, 5th and 9th December.] *St. Maura* was taken on the 16th of April, 1810, by Gen. *Oswald* and Capt. *Eyre*. [Gazettes, 23d June, and 4th August.]—*Corfu* has been strictly blockaded. [Gazette, 18th Aug. 1810.]

† See p. 43.

humbled, one after another: determined to convince Bonaparte, that while HE was idly wasting, in the conquest of kingdoms and empires, the vigour ultimately destined for the overthrow of England, ENGLAND was more prudently reserving her own strength, so as hereafter to meet him at a greater advantage.

But their language is deceitful; this heroic policy was *not* the policy of the ministers of 1806; they now assume it to be the best, because it happens to be diametrically opposite to the policy of their opponents, yet it is in truth not less different from that practised by themselves.

But let the delusion prevail, let us forget all their promises, projects, and failures, and grant that they pursued their "*provident system.*"—I am not the less "ready to go to issue" with Lord GREY.

The question is most incorrectly stated, when it is asked, whether under the "*system of vigour*" our progress is accelerated towards the termination of the war; or whether our dangers are *lessened*, and whether the power of France is *reduced* below what it was, when this country embarked in a military co-operation with the Spanish people;—to the first question, I might object, that it assumes, what I have endeavoured to disprove, that, with a view to a continuance of the war, the *husbanding* system is the best;—but I contend, without hesitation, upon grounds upon which I have already enlarged, that towards, either a termination of the war, or *the accomplishment of the object of the war*,—OUR OWN SECURITY,—the system of vigorous exertion is daily and hourly accelerating our progress.

The second question upon which Lord Grey's issue is to be joined, is still more objectionable; we

are at war with the greatest Conqueror of ancient or modern times, with one, who has, year after year, added new kingdoms to his dominion, and thus, year after year, encreased the means of our destruction: in one instance we endeavour to prevent him; and we are asked, during the progress of the contest, in which he has not obtained his object,—whether his power is *lessened* by our resistance? If our enemy were to attack the Isle of Wight, and we were to oppose him with success, it might quite as fairly be objected, that we had not lessened his power!

What *would have been* his power,—the true question is,—but for the resistance of England?—What *would have been* our danger, if, in addition to all that he had before, BONAPARTE had obtained quiet possession of the *Coasts, Ports, Fleets*, and *Population*, of SPAIN and PORTUGAL *?

Our late exertions have so far exceeded, as well in Success as in Extent, those of any former period of the War, that the Wisdom of those who directed them ought not to be impugned, even though in any particular instance, it may have been proved, by the *result*, that a more adviseable enterprize might have been devised.

But, although I have admitted, that in one instance, a great force was employed unsuccessfully, it

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* I cannot refrain from making one more extract from Capt. *Pasley*. "As a nation, in consequence of the encreasing vigour of our late operations, we have assumed a more martial spirit; and have by degrees begun to feel our own strength; so that although the comparative power of France, is, in reality, greater than it was at the commencement of the present war, yet in point of public opinion, WE, not the French, have been rising in the scale." [P. 322.]

would not, I believe, be easy to prove that by any other application of our force, or by any different combination of our movements, "the power of Bonaparte," at this day, would have been materially affected.

It can hardly be believed, that if the whole force sent to Holland in 1809, had been employed in the Peninsula, the French would have been expelled. Even if it had been possible to act offensively with such a force, in the heart of Spain, little more could have been done, than to defend Portugal, and prevent the army in Spain from marching to the Danube. *This was done.*

There has been no other exception to the policy of directing our efforts, as much as possible, to one great object:—a policy however, which (owing, perhaps, to the want of a field of operation,) those who now recommend it most strongly, were themselves, of all ministers, the farthest from pursuing.

Lord Castlereagh and Lord Wellington have shewn us, what a British Army can effect,—in Europe, and in spite of a Bonaparte. Let the scale of the Experiment be continually enlarged, and we may be assured that the result will be proportionate; —but, at this moment,

Whether compared with the natural result of Lord Grey's imaginary system, or with the actual effect of the measures pursued by the Cabinet of 1806, the policy of the present Administration is conspicuous in its success.

By no government, has so large a force of British soldiers been directed to the objects of war; by no government, since the seven years war, have British troops been employed with equal success; and at no

period, not excepting the seven years war, have our successes affected more nearly and unequivocally the just and righteous interests of War.

ERRATA.

Page 27. line 18. after "*pledged*," read "*of*."
30. line 6 of the note, for "*has*," read "*had*."
57. line 7 of the note, after "*that*," dele "*that*."
58. line 15. for "*effected*," read "*affected*."
59. line 11. before "*the*," read "*If*."
77. line 11. after "*censures*," dele "*to*."
79. line 17 of note * dele "*and*."
144. line 27. after "*disgraceful*," for a (,) put a (.)
155. line 10. at the end, insert a note of *interrogation*.
Id. line 6 from the bottom, for "*respect*," read "*reject*."

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